

Iraqi apology fails to soften US insistence on withdrawal from Kuwait

Saddam sends hostages home for Christmas

By MICHAEL THEODOLOU IN NICOSIA AND OUR FOREIGN STAFF

PRESIDENT Saddam Hussein yesterday ordered the release of all foreigners held in Iraq and Kuwait "with our apologies for all harm". He said that they had given great service to the cause of peace, but were no longer needed and could be home for Christmas.

The decision was welcomed by world leaders who nevertheless insisted that there could still be no negotiation on an unconditional Iraqi withdrawal from Kuwait.

In letting the hostages go, President Saddam is complying with one of a dozen UN resolutions dealing with Kuwait passed since the invasion in August. The move therefore raised hopes of a peaceful solution to the Gulf confrontation, especially as it came the day after Iraq confirmed that it would attend direct talks with America. There were even reports from Baghdad that President Saddam might withdraw some of his troops from Kuwait.

President Bush, who was in Chile yesterday, said of the hostages: "It would be welcome if true, but it will not change my thinking on his need to comply 100 per cent, without condition, to the UN

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resolutions. We've got to keep the pressure on. Saddam understands that his hostage policy has incurred the condemnation of the whole world. No single hostage should not have been taken in the first place.

Mr Bush reiterated that he would not negotiate over a withdrawal from Kuwait and denied that the United States was willing to back a UN resolution calling for an international conference on the Middle East to resolve the confrontation. "There are no secret negotiations, direct or indirect, with Iraq over this question. None, and there will be none. The question is the aggression against Kuwait. There will be and is no linkage to the West Bank."

Baghdad had promised the phased release of all "guests" over a three-month period beginning on Christmas Day, although hundreds have been freed recently after the personal intervention of politicians and elder statesmen. On Wednesday, more than three thousand Russians were told they were being allowed home after Moscow had threatened to use force against Iraq if any of its nationals were harmed. Yesterday, President Saddam said he was bringing forward the release of other foreigners - including nearly 1,200 Britons and 700 Americans - because Iraq no longer needed the "human shield" because its forces were sufficiently dug-in to counter any attack.

President Saddam wrote to the Iraqi parliament, which is expected today to rubber stamp the decision, urging it "to adopt your just decision to lift the travel ban on all foreigners with our apologies for all harm and forgiveness from God Almighty". Iraq's defensive options had been limited and its forces had not completed mobilisation, but now "the

time has come when our forces are fully prepared if they had to fight against the atheists, treacherous people and in defence of nationalistic and humanitarian gains". Holding the hostages "has given a great service to the cause of peace," he said, "and because God has taught us that prohibitions should only be used in extreme cases, it is our duty not to prolong these emergency measures."

The Iraqi leader said that in reaching his decision, he was responding to appeals from Arab leaders, an invitation to his foreign minister, Tariq Aziz, to address the European parliament, and calls by Democrats in Washington for Mr Bush to seek congressional approval before going to war. "All these appeals have encouraged us to respond to the positive transformations which will have a great influence on Western public opinion, particularly in America, to liquidate the evil attempts by the warmongers."

Latif Nassif al-Jassem, the Iraqi information minister, insisted later that the decision was not a sign of weakness, saying: "He who is afraid does not let the hostages out." Some observers, however, said it might finally have dawned on President Saddam that the human shield tactic had backfired, increasing American resolve to use the military option. On Wednesday, the secretary of state, James Baker, told the House of Representatives in Washington: "If force must be used, it will be used suddenly, massively and decisively."

News of the release was greeted with cautious optimism around the world. Oil prices tumbled back to pre-

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Message of hope: Janet Byatt, whose husband is a hostage, with a printout of Saddam's pledge

INSIDE

Melly on Sinatra



As Francis Albert Sinatra nears his 75th birthday, his timing, phrasing and showmanship remain intact. During a life of bravado and heavy drinking, he has given millions to charity. George Melly pays tribute to Old Blue Eyes, described by his biographers as the greatest popular singer of this century. Page 19.

Salmonella rise

A sharp rise in food poisoning attributed to salmonella is fueling calls for another enquiry into the link with eggs and poultry. Page 4

Walesa leads

Lech Walesa led Stanislaw Tyminski in the latest opinion poll as a Polish presidential election campaign marked by insults and murky threats neared an end. Page 10

Lawson denial

Nigel Lawson denies the suggestion by Sir Alan Walters that there may have been a conspiracy in 1989 to get rid of Margaret Thatcher. Letters, page 15

Tunku dies

Tunku Abdul Rahman, the first prime minister of Malaysia and Malaya, died yesterday aged 87. Obituary, page 16

Bond arrest

Alan Bond, the businessman, was arrested yesterday and charged with an offence under Western Australia's Securities Industry Code, which carries a maximum penalty of five years in jail and a fine. Page 25

Durham joins

Durham has become the first county since Glamorgan in 1921 to win first-class status in cricket. Page 42

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Hanson: his corporate pockets are bulging



IRA men jailed for 30 years

By STEWART TENDLER
CRIME CORRESPONDENT

TWO IRA men, arrested as they went to collect an arms and explosives cache hidden at a remote Welsh coastal site, were yesterday sentenced as "merciless men intent on carnage" as an Old Bailey judge sentenced them each to 30 years imprisonment.

Liam O'Dubhair and Damien McComb, both 28, are suspected of taking part in the Deal barracks bombing last year in which 11 servicemen died. Police believe they were about to launch a Christmas campaign using the cache of nearly 100lb of Semtex and devices for 18 bombs when a surveillance operation caught them last December.

Armed police teams from Dyfed-Powys police and Scotland Yard lay hidden watching the cache site after its accidental discovery. The operation was kept secret for weeks by local people and journalists.

Yesterday the Yard issued a warning that the IRA could begin a campaign in the next few weeks. During the day officers from the Yard and the RUC flew to Belgium where detectives are questioning three Irish men arrested with arms in an Antwerp house.

Full details, page 3

Heseltine offer wins support

By DOUGLAS BROOM, LOCAL GOVERNMENT CORRESPONDENT

LABOUR local authority leaders have accepted the invitation from Michael Heseltine, the environment secretary, to take part in his review of the poll tax.

Sir Jack Layden, Labour chairman of the Association of Metropolitan Authorities, said his group would "play a major role" in the review although he urged Mr Heseltine to abandon capping while the enquiry went ahead. Peter Wright, leader of the Labour group on the Conservative-controlled Association of District Councils, said he too would co-operate with Mr Heseltine's review.

The leaders' decision highlights the difficulties caused to Labour by Mr Heseltine's offer of talks. On Wednesday, Bryan Gould, Labour's environment spokesman, rejected the offer unless the government accepted in advance that the poll tax should be abolished.

David Blunkett, the local government spokesman, said last night: "We do not find this in the least embarrassing. Local authority associations have a statutory duty to talk to government."

The environment secretary cannot go on hiding behind the smokescreen of promising talks. He will never escape the simple question which we

intend to repeat - will he abolish the poll tax, yes or no? If he answers in the affirmative and expresses his willingness to establish a modern and fair rating system then serious talks can begin."

Mr Heseltine's views on the future shape of local government, which his review will examine alongside the poll tax, have wider support in local government than had been thought, according to a new survey.

A poll of 243 district and county council leaders found that more than a fifth supported Mr Heseltine's plan to introduce directly elected mayors as a means of reducing party political influence in councils. A similar proportion also endorsed the idea of reducing the number of councillors.

The survey, carried out jointly by the Local Government Chronicle and recruitment consultants SPA, also noted growing support for the abolition of one of the two existing tiers of local government.

As it was being published the Association of District Councils launched the government's review of the poll tax with a plan for the abolition of county councils which it said could save more than £100 million.

Europe farm deal unlocks door to Gatt pact

FROM MICHAEL BINYON
AND PETER GUILFORD
IN BRUSSELS

AN eleventh-hour breakthrough was within sight yesterday evening in the fraught world trade talks, with a sudden breaking of the four-day deadlock on agriculture. "The impasse has been broken," said Mats Hestrom, the Swedish farm minister steering the agriculture talks. The European Community agreed for the first time to make specific cuts in export subsidies and open its markets wider to outsiders - key demands of the Americans and other powerful farm exporting nations.

This commitment, made after the deadline had been twice extended and under the threat of a walk-out by Carla Hills, the American Trade Representative, immediately unlocked the way to virtual agreement in the four other pivotal sectors: trade in services, textiles, copyright and investment and procedures for setting rules of trade.

These could be wrapped up within a day," said Peter Lilley, Britain's trade secretary. But a spokesman for the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (Gatt) said the talks were still a long way from success.

After four days of threats and recriminations, time is now very short for agreement. Farm ministers from all leading Gatt groups met again last night. At 11am this morning the Uruguayan foreign minister chairing the round will decide whether the conference can still be salvaged. It is due to end this evening, but officials said it could run on into the weekend if things looked promising enough.

The breakthrough came after a day of mounting tension, as the European Community fought to prevent suspension of the talks. EC ministers bitterly attacked America for attempting to dictate terms while refusing to make any movement until the farm row was settled. "This is no way for the largest trading power in the world to be addressed by the second largest," John Gummer, Britain's agriculture secretary, said. The US "should take a leaf out of the European book" and learn to negotiate properly.

EC ministers, meeting in another emergency session yesterday morning, gave the Commission negotiators a broad framework to strike a

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Closing ranks, page 10

Saturday Review

Alone is not lonely...



Diane Keaton is an actress who in her private life is very much a loner. How does that approach play on Hollywood's gregarious stage?

Moscow: five to midnight?

Mikhail Gorbachev faces his gravest crisis as the Soviet Union appeals for help to relieve food shortages. Gail Sheehy assesses his chances

Out of gown, into glitter



Society women are stepping out of ballgowns into something with a little more sparkle

Plus...

Ian McEwan on his unwanted image, understanding literary England. Jonathan Meades digests English food but regrets the bills. Richard Rogers on his childhood problems

A classroom of their own

What's wrong with school? Our young readers get full marks for forceful answers

Tomorrow's Times: order it to be sure of it



Chain Reactions
by
Paloma Picasso

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Comment, page 27

Iraq hostage deal may bring 5p cut in price of petrol

By KEVIN EASON, MOTORING CORRESPONDENT

PETROL prices could fall by five pence a gallon after news of the possible release of hostages brought the cost of bulk oil supplies to its lowest level since the invasion of Kuwait.

Oil companies were waiting last night for calm to return to world markets before making a decision on pump prices.

Shell, which has 2,800 filling stations, said: "We will stick to our promise to have prices at the pumps follow the rise and fall on spot markets. The situation is very volatile at the moment as markets react to what is going on, but we will act as soon as the scene has clarified, if new oil prices warrant cuts at the pumps."

BP said: "Prices have fallen to levels we saw before the Gulf crisis blew up. If this situation persists, prices will fall into line."

Oil prices fell immediately to about \$25 a barrel and bulk petrol to \$250 a tonne, the lowest since July, on news that Saddam Hussein had said he was prepared to release hostages being held in Kuwait and Iraq.

Petrol prices are already

down to the level they stood at when the Gulf confrontation started on August 2, but analysts believe another five to 10p could be cut from pump prices if a peace deal looked more likely.

Prices have fallen 31p from Shell's record 239.6p at the start of October to an average 208.7p a gallon for four star and 195p for unleaded.

The recession in High Street spending was underlined yesterday as figures showed an 18.02 per cent drop in new car sales.

The fall was the second highest of the year and means car manufacturers face substantial reductions in sales over last year's record figure of 2.3 million. Sales in the first 11 months were 1.946 million - 12.11 per cent below last year's figures.

November sales were 117,499 compared with 143,323 for the same month in 1989, according to figures issued yesterday by the Society of Motor Manufacturers and Traders (SMMT).

Worst affected is Ford, Britain's largest car company, which has seen its sales de-

cline by more than 97,000 and its market share fall from 26.4 per cent to 25 per cent so far this year.

Even the company's new Escort range, a best seller for eight years, has failed to make a similar impact. Last month the car was fourth in the league table of top sellers, with 7,404 sold.

That is well down on September's total of 9,632 Escorts sold, before the facelifted model, which cost £1 billion to develop, was launched.

Importers took 54 per cent of the market compared with 56.5 per cent in November 1989. Their share for the first 11 months of this year is 56.9 per cent, slightly below the 57 per cent recorded for January-November 1989.

The November 1990 top 10 sellers were:

1. Ford Fiesta (9,669 sold);
2. Vauxhall Cavalier (9,625);
3. Ford Sierra (8,068);
4. Ford Escort (7,404);
5. Vauxhall Astra (6,397);
6. Rover 200 (4,582);
7. Ford Orion (3,878);
8. Peugeot 205 (3,526);
9. Rover Metro (3,417);
10. Vauxhall Nova (3,211).

Agents cheered by rumours of move

By ALAN HAMILTON

THE charms of leafy Dulwich are not, apparently, all they are cracked up to be. One of the few cheery words of gossip in the otherwise gloomy business of estate agency is that the Thatchers are on the move.

There have been at least two confirmed sightings recently of Denis inspecting properties in other parts of town. He was seen not long ago studying the ambience of Prince Albert Road, between Regent's Park and Primrose Hill, where snips are to be had in these depressed times for under a million, and more recently at a refurbished crescent at St Katharine's Dock, where prices start at £725,000.

Property sources dismissed reports that the Thatchers had shown interest in the house at no 35 Tite Street, Chelsea, being offered at £7.5 million. Built on the site of Whistler's studio, it dates from 1965 and offers five reception rooms, a master bedroom suite and five further bedrooms.

Mrs Thatcher is known to like Chelsea and may regret selling her Flood Street house for £300,000 in 1985



Together again: Ronald Reagan kissing Margaret Thatcher as they met for tea in a London hotel yesterday

to buy the Barratt mock-Georgian pile in Dulwich for £400,000, now worth an estimated £600,000. Mr Thatcher may be less keen; Chelsea is not over-endowed with golf courses, while the Dulwich home overlooks one.

One speculative theory was that an anonymous well-wisher, possibly a busi-

nessman who had prospered under Thatcherism, was so grateful for her unwavering adherence to market economics that he was prepared to pay for any house she wanted, just as an admirer bought Chartwell for Churchill. There was, however, no evidence of any such beneficence.

Tea-time memories

WHEN they planned their European trip, Ronald and Nancy Reagan did not expect to be entertaining Margaret Thatcher to afternoon tea in Claridge's Hotel yesterday; the itinerary definitely said Downing Street. But that was before history sent the former president's ally to join him in retirement.

The Reagans, on a five-day visit to Britain, met just about everybody who was anybody yesterday, beginning with cocktails at Clarence House with the Queen Mother, a lady whose many distinctions include the

pouring of generous measures. They moved directly to Buckingham Palace for a private lunch with her daughter, an occasion almost disrupted by the late arrival of her son-in-law.

The Duke of Edinburgh became fog-bound on his return from the Far East and Australia, and arrived at the table in the nick of time.

Before the day was ended, the Reagans got to Downing Street, to be received by John Major, the one important figure with whom they could not exchange pleasantries about the last time they met.

Celebrity return for Tory choice

JOHN Taylor, the Tory prospective parliamentary candidate for Cheltenham, returned to the constituency yesterday for the first time since he was described as a "bloody nigger" by a local party member.

Cheltenham people stood in the street open-mouthed as Mr Taylor strode from a charity lunch at the Queen's hotel to the Conservative Association headquarters, via the town hall. There were not staring at Mr Taylor, however. Their interest was taken by the pack of press photographers and television cameramen who followed Mr Taylor.

Some people waited patiently to shake Mr Taylor by the hand and wish him well, but they could not penetrate the pack until he had reached the town hall.

David Patterson, a GCHQ employee, and his wife Sheila, took a short break from decorating to meet Mr Taylor. "It's the best thing that's happened to Cheltenham for years," Mr Patterson said.

Doris Mustoe, a housewife, and Margaret Justin, an NHS domestic supervisor, waited patiently to shake Mr Taylor by the hand. "He seemed pleasant enough," they said. They did not believe his colour would prevent him retaining the seat for the Tories. "He'll get in," Mrs Justin said. "Cheltenham is a Conservative place but I don't believe his colour makes any difference," Mr Taylor repeated.

answers to questions he was plainly tired of hearing: No, he bore Mr Galbraith no animosity; yes, he was confident of winning and was moving into the constituency. Claims that Kenneth Baker, the home secretary, had pressured the local party into adopting him he described as "codswallop". He refused to say whom he would support in an England/West Indies Test, saying he did not wish to trivialise race relations in that way. He did have some advice for the England captain, however: "Stick in there," he said, "like I'm doing."

Looting fear kept jewel find secret

NEWS of the discovery of one of the most important finds of Anglo Saxon jewellery this century has been suppressed deliberately for fear of looters in the treasure site (Simon Tait writes).

The accidental discovery of jewellery on the Boss Hall industrial estate in Ipswich was made in May but kept secret until this week. Just 25 miles away, the Icklingham Bronzes, a collection of Romano-British pieces, were stolen from farmland by thieves using metal detectors.

Archaeologists and British Museum experts believe that the latest hoard, including a rare cloisonné brooch encrusted with garnets, is second only to the Sutton Hoo burial ship finds made nine miles from Ipswich in 1939.

The Boss Hall find was made after archaeologists recognised the outlines of 22 graves. In a two-day excavation a block of earth containing the treasure was lifted out and taken to the British Museum for examination.

Keith Wade, of the Suffolk County Archaeological Unit, said the treasure dated from the 7th century and belonged to minor gentry.

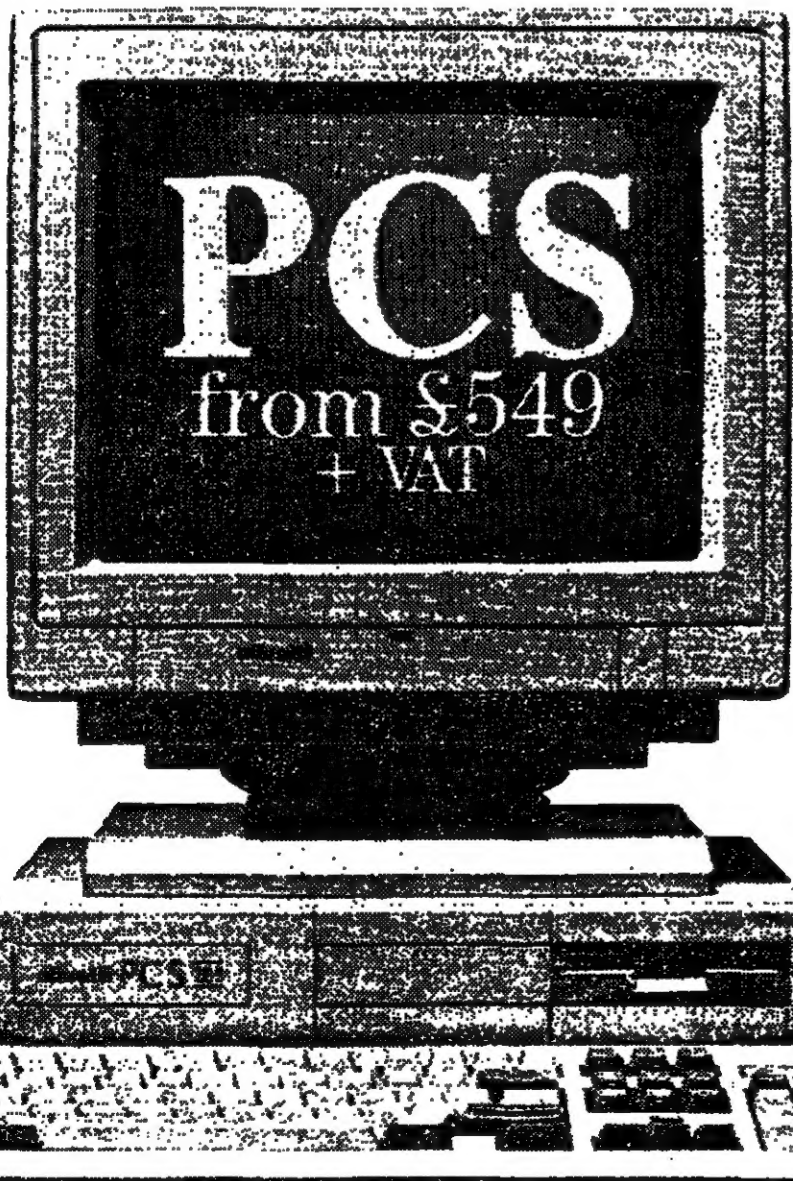
Doctors accused

Two doctors used their patients' confidential records to set up a mail-shot business that included promotion for an undertakers, the professional conduct committee of the General Medical Council was told yesterday. Dr Michael Blackmore, aged 34, and Dr Tim Timberlake, aged 33, who run a practice in Wimborne, Dorset, deny serious professional misconduct. The hearing continues today.

Hatton meeting

A meeting organised yesterday by Derek Hatton, former deputy leader of Liverpool city council, to meet his creditors after the collapse of Settle, his public relations and property development company, was attended only by the Inland Revenue. The company went into liquidation after police investigations. Mr Hatton said £17,000 was owed to the taxman and other liabilities amounted to £4,000.

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ALL TRADEMARKS ACKNOWLEDGED

مكزنا من الاصل

IRA arms cache men sentenced to 30 years in prison

By STEWART TENDLER, CRIME CORRESPONDENT

TWO IRA terrorists caught uncovering an arms cache at a remote Welsh beauty spot were each jailed for 30 years yesterday by a judge at the Old Bailey.

Mr Justice Simon Brown told Liam O'Dhuibhir and Damien McComb that they were "ruthless, dangerous, merciless men intent on car-

nage". Neither was charged with a specific IRA attack, but Scotland Yard detectives believe that they were part of the active service unit that last year blew up a Royal Marine barracks at Deal, Kent, killing 11 handsmen.

The men, both aged 28, were caught on the eve of initiating what police suspect

would have been a Christmas bombing campaign. The two, who denied conspiring to cause explosions, showed no emotion as the jury returned its verdict after 90 minutes. As they went to the cells both gave clenched-fist salutes and shouted: "Victory to the IRA".

They were discovered almost a year ago near Newgale in Dyfed as they dug up part of a big cache including Semtex explosive, weapons, hand-grenades and material for 18 bombs. Police had been watching the spot for over a month after the cache was discovered accidentally.

In a flat used by the men in Lutton, detectives later found lists of targets including members of the cabinet, details of senior servicemen, and maps showing military bases. Police also found four false passports and two copies of Home Office security passes.

Yesterday the judge told the two men: "There is no doubt whatever you are a pair of IRA terrorists who were intent last year upon a bombing campaign here on the mainland which would have wreaked death and destruction, very probably singling out men of public service, worth and honour as your victims."

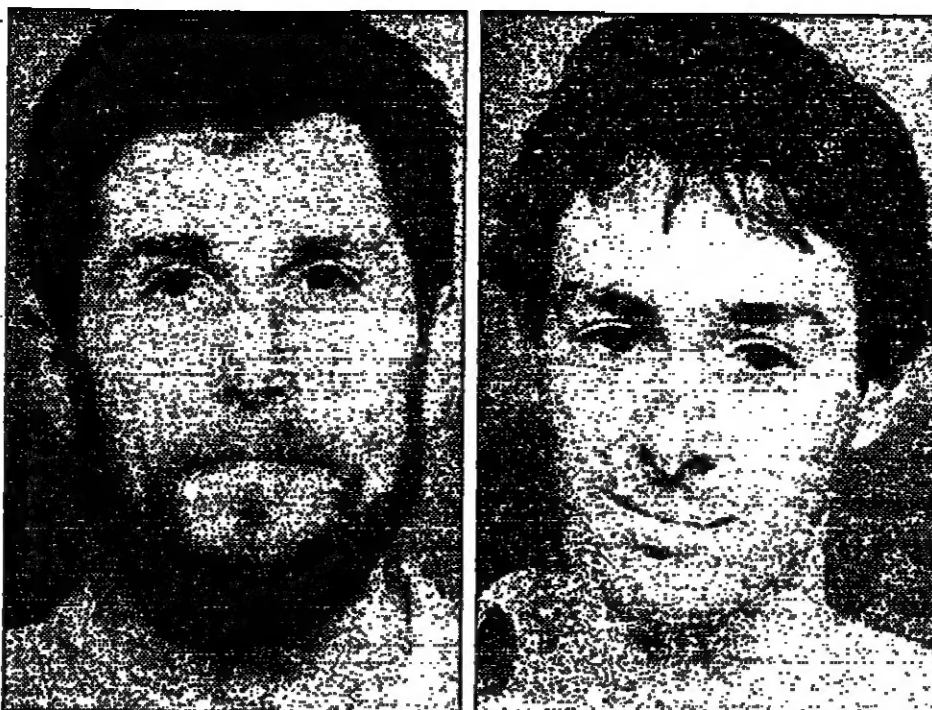
Had you succeeded, you would have left untold loss and suffering in your wake. Only a benign fate intervened and stopped you in your tracks." The aspiration to have a united Ireland was legitimate, he said. "But that aspiration is perverted when you resort to violence."

He went on: "What you did stains the fair name of Ireland and arouses here much undeserved suspicion towards countless of your fellow countrymen." The judge said that he was making no distinction between the two, but was satisfied that O'Dhuibhir was the leader of the "unit" and the more experienced terrorist.

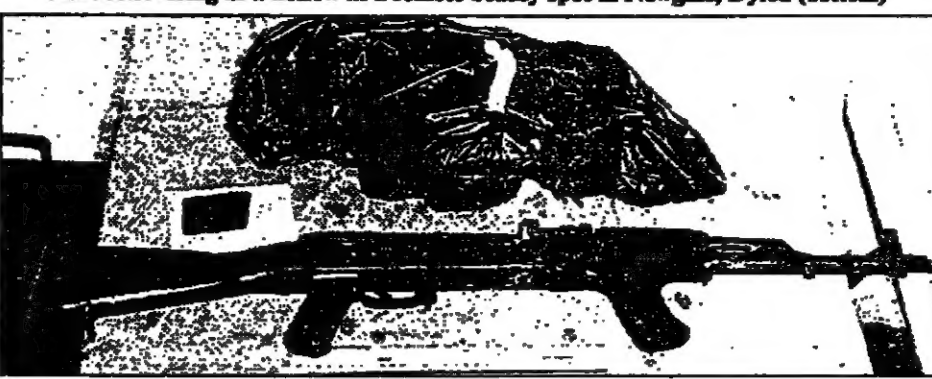
During the trial the prosecution told the court that police had recovered three rifles, a shotgun, six handguns, a large amount of ammunition, Semtex explosive, five Russian-made hand-grenades, and bomb circuitry that included long-delay timers and detonators. Enough sophisticated equipment was found to construct several car bombs or a larger number of conventional bombs.

McComb, who described himself as an Irish nationalist opposed to violence, was the only one of the two to give evidence in the witness box. He said that they had been duped into believing that they were being sent to Britain to collect a van to be used in Ireland for the welfare of prisoners' families. Only when they arrived on the mainland had they discovered the true nature of their mission, which was to take the equipment back to Ireland for repair, he said.

Police suspect that McComb and O'Dhuibhir were planning to launch an attack within 24 hours of their arrival at St Bride's Bay on December 21. When police moved in, they discovered that McComb already had selected from the cache four large magnets, key requirements for car bombs.



Thwarted terrorists: O'Dhuibhir (left) and McComb and part of their cache of explosives, weapons and bomb-making equipment (below), which police caught them uncovering in a hollow at a remote beauty spot in Newgale, Dyfed (bottom)



Ripper's wife denies using link for gain

By PAUL WILKINSON

SONIA Sutcliffe, the wife of the Yorkshire Ripper, was yesterday accused of using her relationship to the mass murderer to "court" the press for financial gain.

Counsel for the *News of the World*, which she is suing in the High Court for libel, pressed her on why she did not divorce her husband Peter, convicted in 1981 of the murder of 13 women.

"Is it not desperately important to publicly divorce yourself from this man by law: this man who has perpetrated such atrocious crimes?" asked George Carman, QC. "While you remain his wife, you on occasions use that position with the press." She replied: "I do not use it."

Mrs Sutcliffe, aged 40, of Heaton, West Yorkshire, is suing the newspaper over an article alleging that she had an affair with George Papoutsis, a Greek who allegedly looks like her husband, and did not tell him about her husband.

Mrs Sutcliffe claims that the newspaper report was libellous because it meant she deceived Mr Papoutsis by keeping the existence of her husband secret. She says she was under no obligation to tell him. Mrs Sutcliffe denied Mr Carman's suggestions that her real complaint was that a journalist friend, Barbara Jones, had "betrayed" her.

Later Mrs Sutcliffe was cross-examined by Miss Jones, who has been named by the *News of the World* as a third party in the action, enabling it to seek damages from her if the case goes against it. Miss Jones maintained that their relationship had always been professional. The hearing continues today.

Jail 'was told boy might kill himself'

By QUENTIN COWDRY
HOME AFFAIRS
CORRESPONDENT

STAFF at Swansea jail were told that a schoolboy, who was later found hanging in his cell, was a suicide risk as soon as he went to prison, an inquest was told yesterday.

Joseph Dowdall, a social worker, said he told prison officers his fears about Phillip Knight, aged 15, on the day he was remanded on theft charges. Police had also been informed that he was a suicide risk. Mr Dowdall told Swansea and Gower coroner's court: "I spoke to the officer in charge and informed him of the possibility that Phillip might take his own life. To my knowledge, no immediate action was taken."

He told the coroner that the officer had not wanted to be "too alarmist", even though the boy had previously cut one of his wrists and had made 11 attempts to escape from children's homes.

Vincent Williams, a prison officer, denied that staff at Swansea had received a warning. He believed the boy might attempt to injure himself, but he did not think he was a serious suicide risk. His prison file described him as being "no risk at this time".

The teenager, from Haverfordwest, Dyfed, was discovered dead on July 13 this year. He was remanded in custody in June. His death prompted ministers to speed up attempts to reduce sharply the number of juveniles remanded to adult prisons.

About 1,600 juveniles are held in adult jails while they await trial each year, but ministers believe many could be held safely in council-run secure units. There are no such units in Wales.

A 42-day watch that netted top police targets

THE drive from Lutton to southwest Wales had been long. None the less, the two men got to work as soon as they reached the cliffs above St Bride's Bay well after dark on a cold December night last year (Stewart Tandler writes). They would have to drive back immediately if a new attack was to be carried out before Christmas.

Damien McComb did the digging while Liam O'Dhuibhir scanned the darkness with a shotgun at the ready. The last consignment had been removed from its hiding place and the two were getting ready to leave when a searchlight silhouetted them.

There was a shout: "Armed police, stand still". The man with the shotgun raised it and somewhere in the darkness a police gun cracked out a single shot. O'Dhuibhir threw down his weapon. After a secret 42-day watch on one of the IRA's key arms dumps police had captured two members of the active service unit stalking the mainland.

Within days Scotland Yard's anti-terrorist branch had established that the two men, sentenced yesterday at the Central Criminal Court, held impeccable IRA credentials. McComb, brought up in Belfast, is the brother of John McComb, who was sentenced to life imprisonment for IRA activities involving Gerard Tuite, a top IRA activist on the mainland in the late 1970s. O'Dhuibhir, the son of a Dublin engineer, was drawn to the IRA as a student involved in anti-drugs activity in Dublin. He was an outstanding undergraduate at University College, Dublin, but did not turn up for his final examinations. He enrolled instead for a business studies course in Dublin, which he was attending when he was arrested in March 1984 during a botched kidnap carried out by an active service unit. O'Dhuibhir was sentenced to five years and sent to Portlaoise jail.

O'Dhuibhir returned to the IRA on his release from jail in 1988. He is thought to have arrived in Britain with McComb in about March last year as active service units gathered for an autumn cam-

paign on the mainland. The two men spent much of their time based in the Lutton area.

Some time in the late summer detectives believe a trawler or small boat crossed from the Irish Republic to land a substantial cache of explosives, arms and ammunition close to Newgale in Dyfed. McComb and O'Dhuibhir were in the party that hid the consignment on the cliffs above St Bride's Bay.

Police believe the first target for that cache was the Royal Marine barracks at Deal, Kent, bombed on September 22 when 11 handsmen died. McComb and O'Dhuibhir are suspected of being part of the unit that went to ground in the ensuing manhunt.

In October a cache of devices with 500b of Semtex was found hidden in Hampstead, north London. In November the IRA mounted two car bomb attacks on military targets seriously wounding a sergeant in Colchester, Essex. As Christmas drew near the two men went back to Wales for supplies.

What they did not know was that in October last year two National Trust wardens and a birdwatcher had accidentally stumbled on their caches. Police replaced nearly 100lb of Semtex with a safe substitute and put replica guns in place of the arsenal of ten weapons. Local villagers were sworn to secrecy as Welsh and Yard officers began a 24-hour vigil at the site.

Police suspect that McComb and O'Dhuibhir were planning to launch an attack within 24 hours of their arrival at St Bride's Bay on December 21. When police moved in, they discovered that McComb already had selected from the cache four large magnets, key requirements for car bombs.

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Police blame long hours and faulty computers

POLICE officers in Derbyshire yesterday supported the report that said bureaucratic controls imposed by the Labour-controlled county council had brought the force to the brink of inefficiency.

Officers complained of under-staffing, long hours, and Dickensian book-keeping because of poor technology and a computer system prone to failure.

The report on the force by Geoffrey Dear, inspector of constabulary for the Midlands, was described by Kenneth Baker, the home secretary, as among the worst on any police force. He said the county council and police authority had substantial resources to spend on policing. The council claimed that poor Home Office funding and the government's poll-tax cap on the county were the cause of conditions in the force.

Mr Dear said the poor state of police buildings in Derbyshire was extraordinary and complained that control of the force's £60 million budget was not devolved to the chief constable, but retained by the council.

Officers and staff in the force's control room were yesterday sent a petition to the chief constable complaining about the poor state of the computer system, which is awaiting a £2.3 million replacement.

Roger Summers, head of the force scientific support unit, has no deputy and is on

What is wrong with Derbyshire police, said to be on "the brink of inefficiency"?
Craig Seton investigates

call 24 hours a day, seven days a week. He said: "We are already doing more work than the national average and have a higher case load than any other force of our size. It is fortunate our officers are skilled, dedicated and take a pride in what they do."

He said that an extra six scenes-of-crime officers were needed to complement the present staff of 26. One scenes-of-crime officer said yesterday: "On average you are supposed to do something like 600 jobs per man a year maximum. We do about 850."

The Derbyshire police fingerprint bureau is experiencing a staffing shortage. It should have nine staff, but has six. Detectives in the force also complained about conditions and hours and low morale. One CID officer said: "We're working in buildings where the plaster is falling off the walls. The telephone system is totally inadequate and the number of lines has been reduced to save money. You have to queue for a telephone. Our overtime has also been cut." A detective said: "No wonder everyone is cheesed off." One inspector claimed

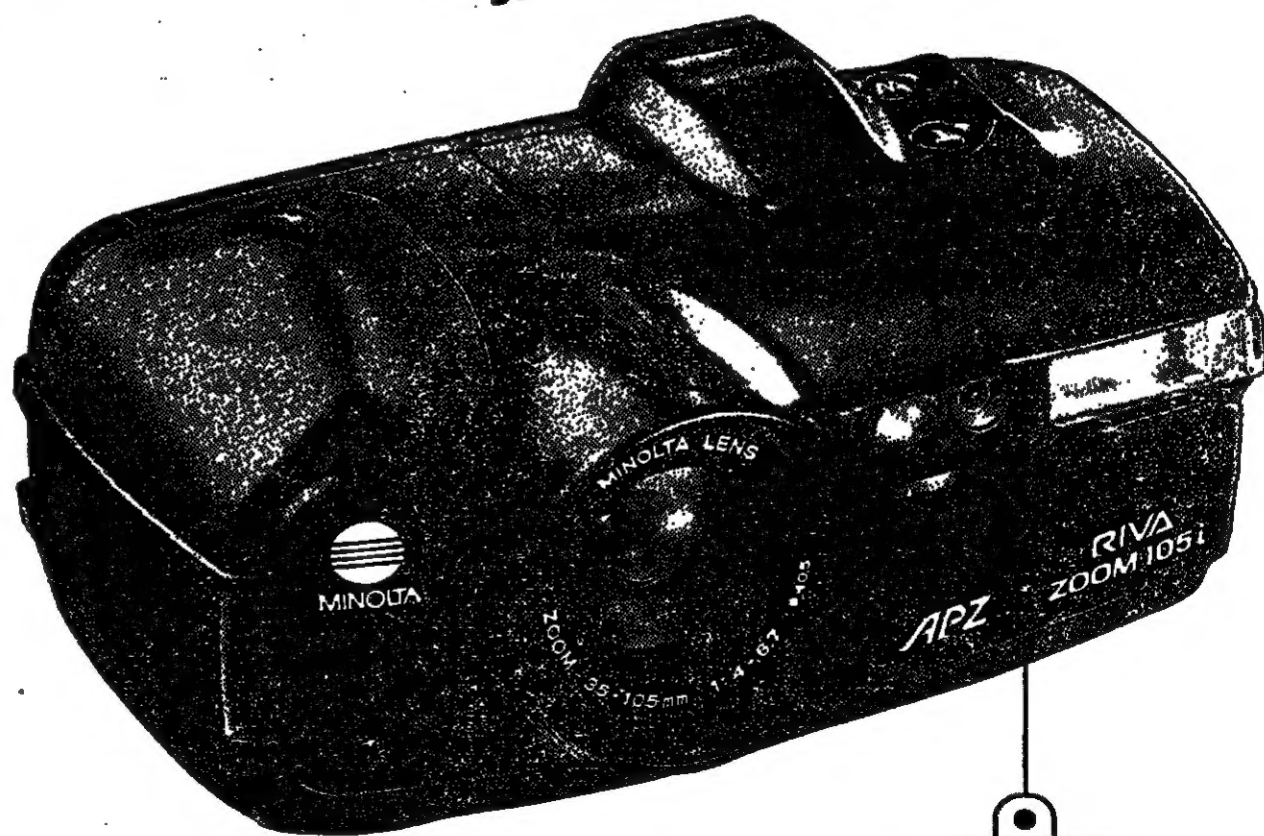
that John Newing, the chief constable, should have publicly supported the inspector's conclusions about the state of the force. The inspector said: "It is widely felt he missed a golden opportunity. He had the chance to show Derbyshire county council in its true colours. I suppose when all this dies down, he still has to work with them."

The county council has blamed the cap on its community charge rate for the condition of the force. Of £40 million cut from the county budget, £2 million is being cut from the £60 million police budget. Bob Jones, chairman of the police committee, said that the Peartree section station, an aging prefabricated building near Derby football ground, would probably cost £750,000 to replace and would have taken up almost all of last year's capital allocation from the Home Office. He said that the county had asked for £2 million and received £800,000.

This year the force is asking for £5 million, more than £2 million of which would be spent on a new command and control computer system. He said: "We do not expect to get it all." Alan Smith, the former Derbyshire chief constable, who retired this year, said last night: "I agree with the report. It has no surprises. It is merely an amalgam of other reports submitted more confidentially over the years."

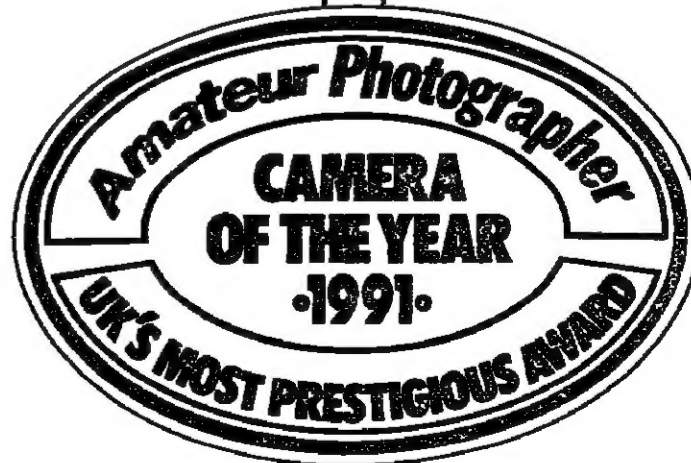
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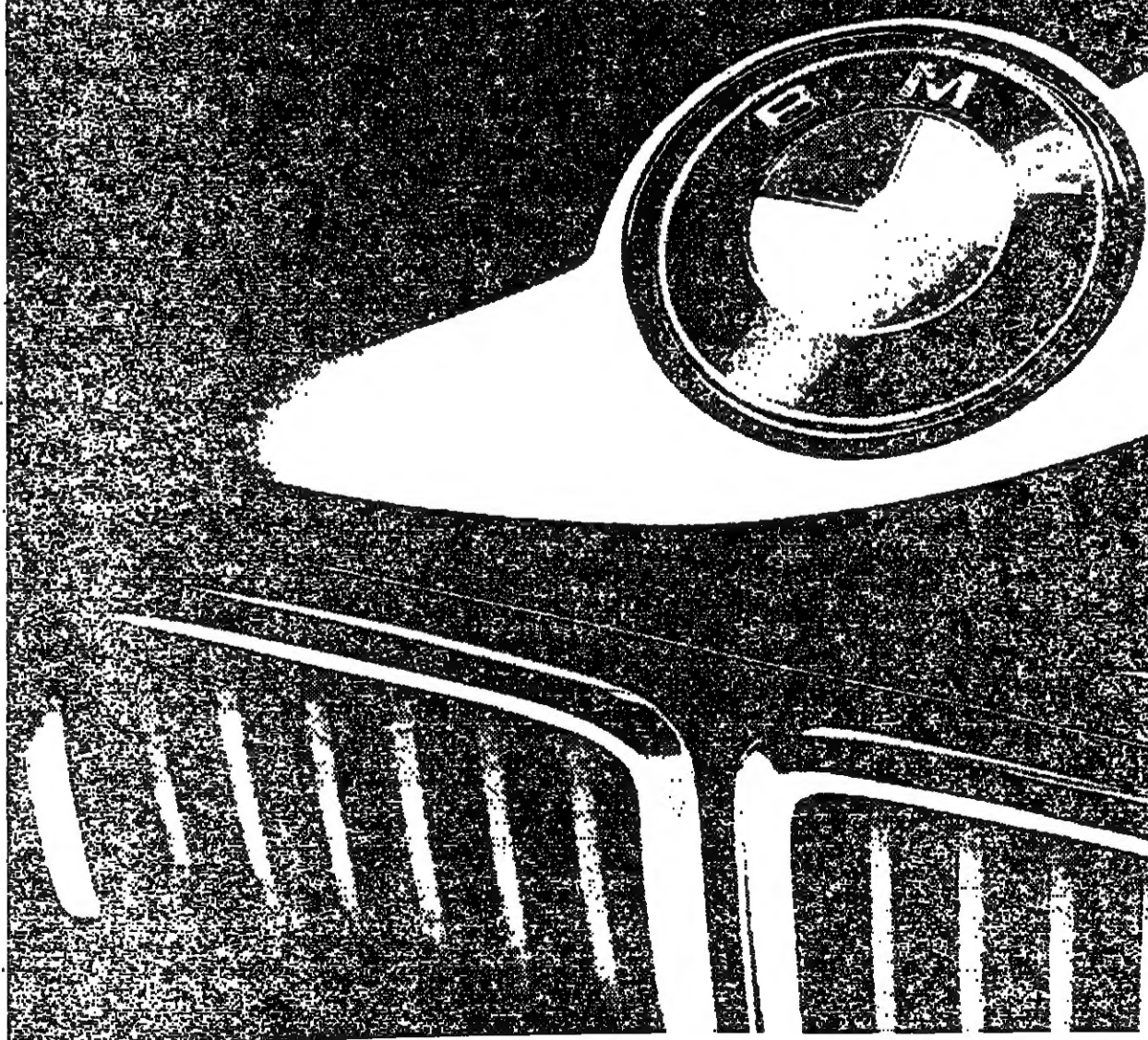
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By MICHAEL HORNSEY, AGRICULTURE CORRESPONDENT

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THE ULTIMATE DRIVING MACHINE

Scholey defends Scottish closure

By SHEILA GUNN
POLITICAL REPORTER

SIR Robert Scholey, the British Steel chairman, yesterday strongly defended plans to close Ravenscraig's hot strip mill in Motherwell with the loss of 770 jobs and ruled out its sale to another operator.

He told MPs that he thought that the mill's assets would be sold for scrap. He refused to rule out the closure of other parts of the Ravenscraig complex which trade unionists believe will be at risk without the hot strip mill.

Called before the Commons trade and industry committee, Sir Robert, who admitted under pressure that he had not visited Ravenscraig since 1985, insisted that British Steel must cut costs because of weak market conditions. The company could make better profits operating two rather than three hot strip mills, but he could not disclose the profit position at Ravenscraig.

The committee is to question the new Scottish secretary, Ian Lang, next week about the closure plans and the prospects for Scotland's steel industry.

Where loyalty comes first, principle second

By PHILIP WEBSTER
CHIEF POLITICAL
CORRESPONDENT

MICHAEL Jopling, chief whip in the first Thatcher government, had a credo with which few who have held that post would quarrel. Asked once by a senior backbencher if he agreed that loyalty should come before principle, he replied: "Yes, absolutely".

The story was recalled yesterday as the lower-than-expected Conservative majority in the Commons poll tax debate led some to ponder whether a less stringent whipping regime would accompany the softer tone coming from Downing Street since John Major's arrival. The answer is almost certainly no.

As rebellions go, it was of the "small earthquake" variety. Indeed it hardly merited the revolt label. Of the 60 Conservative MPs who did not vote for the government, half a dozen at most were genuine rebels.

John Lee, who had memorably told the Commons earlier that the poll tax was a flagship which had destroyed the admiral (that is, Margaret Thatcher), voted with the Opposition, and four others deliberately abstained. Nevertheless, the result left Labour



John Wakeham



Tim Renton



David Waddington



Richard Ryder



Michael Jopling

our MPs happier than at any time since the election of Mr Major. They felt they had taken the shine off Michael Heseltine's return to the dispatch box. One government whip ruefully claimed that they had staged a coup against the BBC which led its early-morning bulletins yesterday with stories of the "rebellion".

Not much of an inquest was required by the Conservative whips. Nearly all the absentees, who included Mrs Thatcher, the foreign, defence and energy secretaries, and a host of other ministers, had been given permission to stay away. Despite the arrival

of Mr Heseltine at the environment department, the whips had expected at least a few rebels.

The reason the majority fell below 60 was the strong attendance of the Opposition parties. Richard Ryder, the new government chief whip, was following the practice of his recent predecessors of aiming for a majority in the 65-70 range. For some years it has been usual not to try to muster the full 95 majority on all divisions, even those of the three-line variety.

Whips admitted yesterday that at least 33 MPs had been unofficially "slipped": told they need not turn up. Seven-

teen were at the Council of Europe in Brussels, others were at important meetings in marginal constituencies, some were attending their constituency executives. Mrs Thatcher was with Ronald Reagan.

One whip said: "Surely 57 is a big enough majority. Labour would love a majority of one. People are not going to be brought back from all corners for nothing." With extra forces at their disposal, the whips believe it better to deploy them in the right places.

Derek Foster, Labour chief whip, often the butt of criticism in the past for failing to

mobilise his troops, pulled out the stops on an issue that his party believes will be vital in the next election campaign. He ordered everyone back. The result was that only eight Labour MPs who were entitled to vote did not do so; seven had acceptable reasons for being away, and only one who should have attended, David Lambie, failed to do so. It was Labour's best turnout on such an occasion since 1983.

Tory chief whips of the past decade have all had their own ways of keeping their forces in order, and bringing the rebels into line. They are as powerful as any member

of the government other than the prime minister. It is their advice that counts when the prime minister is considering promotions or bringing MPs into the government.

Most MPs who have served throughout those years agree that Mr Jopling was the toughest, but then he had a smaller majority (44) than his successors to protect. Mr Jopling was not averse to summoning recalcitrants to his office off the members' lobby and bawling them out.

John Wakeham, who ran the whips' office with smooth efficiency from 1983 to 1987, took a more persuasive line,

inviting in potential rebels for a glass of whisky, but letting them know in unmistakable terms that they were letting the side down. David Waddington, who replaced him, also had a genial air, but ran the office in a more military style, and often delivered stern lectures to his colleagues. Tim Renton, who had never been in the whips' office before being sent there to replace Mr Waddington in October 1989, had a more urbane style, but was reputed to have a prodigious memory for the most minor sins.

All of them had powerful backbones. Tristan Garel-Jones, deputy to three, was known to put the fear of God into some of the less experienced colleagues. David Lightbown, still in Mr Ryder's team, is built like a nightclub bouncer and scares some of his backbenchers by his sheer physical presence.

Mr Ryder, who took over last week, goes to the post as probably one of the most popular figures ever to be appointed to it. There will be few histrionics. Calling everyone back on Wednesday would have been overkill that would have eaten into the fund of good will with which he starts the job.

Leading article, page 15

Hurd sets British agenda for Rome

By PETER MULLIGAN AND RICHARD FORD

EUROPE

BRITAIN is to press at next week's inter-governmental conference in Rome on political union for sanctions to be imposed on member states of the European Community which ignore rulings of the European court.

The government will also urge the European parliament to monitor more closely the work of the European Commission. It will call for the Community to take on a co-ordinating role in some aspects of security including confidence-building measures that flow from the CSCE.

Douglas Hurd told MPs

that he wanted the EC to be more efficient and effective but said that Britain remained opposed to giving the Commission or the European parliament greater powers.

Outlining a more pragmatic approach towards developments in the Community, Mr Hurd said: "We do not see the Community as a river or even a glacier which moves minute by minute inevitably, inexorably in a preordained direction. That is not how it works or how it should work."

"The Community evolves but that takes place by working out what the Community's actual needs are but not by an inevitable law of gravity or by some movement in the stars."

He said they had not been persuaded by calls for an extension of the commission's powers, of qualified majority voting or of additional powers for the European parliament. "But because we have to say that we are not persuaded of the case for these changes, it does not mean that our stance in this conference will be a negative one."

Before Mr Hurd told MPs in the Commons of the government's ideas, Whitehall sources made plain that, contrary to earlier indications, there was no plan to publish a comprehensive paper on its approach towards Europe. They indicated that Mr Hurd was working on a speech that would set out the government's attitude towards the Community.

In a debate on developments in the Community, Mr Hurd said that he wanted to make it more efficient and effective, to improve compliance with European court rulings, strengthen the voice of Europe in the world and to improve the scrutiny of the commission.

Britain would press for sanctions to be levied against member states that failed to comply with court rulings and wanted the European parliament to "direct fiscal energy" at monitoring commission spending rather than seeking new legislative powers.

While opposing Community involvement in some aspects of defence policy, particularly the deployment of troops and weapons, he said it could have a co-ordinating role in matters of European security.

Mr Hurd suggested that the Community could take on some of the ideas accepted at the Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe including confidence-building schemes and the conciliation of disputes.

Throughout his speech the foreign secretary remained much more eloquent towards the Community.

'Bungalow blight' in Ulster

ENVIRONMENT

NORTHERN Ireland was suffering from bungalow blight, pollution and the destruction of its countryside because of the lack of planning and "green" laws, the Commons environment committee said yesterday (Sheila Gunn writes).

The MPs' report added that "the troubles" did not remove the need for extending British and European environmental protection laws to the province. The Tory-dominated committee criticised the government's attitude to the planning laws and called for action to stop the destruction of ancient peat bogs and to control smoke and water pollution, poison waste dumps and development in the countryside.

"As far as the environment is concerned, Northern Ireland is now at a crossroads. We were pleased to see signs of economic recovery but are concerned about the impact that this could have without a clear, coherent policy on the environment in Northern Ireland," the report said.

Environmental protection was far less highly developed in Ulster than in the rest of the United Kingdom.

The committee recommended that the government should:

- extend British and EC environmental laws to Northern Ireland;
- protect Strangford Lough from large-scale commercial fishing;
- prosecute for water pollution;
- outlaw sales of unauthorised fuels in smoke-control areas;
- review planning laws;
- set up an environmental agency;
- designate and protect important peat bogs; and
- publish annual environmental statistics for the whole UK and for Northern Ireland.

Parliament next week

The main business in the House of Commons next week is expected to be:
Monday: Road Traffic bill, second reading.
Tuesday: Debate on the Gulf crisis.
Wednesday: Debate on an Opposition motion on an economic recession.
Thursday: Debate on investigations under company and financial services law.
Friday: Debate on economic, environmental and population issues in the developing world.

The main business in the Lords is expected to be:
Tuesday: Statutory Sick Pay bill, second reading. Debate on vocational training.
Wednesday: Debate on custodial and non-custodial sentences.
Thursday: Maintenance Enforcement bill, committee.

Parliament today

Commons (9.30): Debate on private member's motion on UK political developments since 1979.



GLENFIDDICH
IS A TIME YOU
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Labour plans health service free of the market place

By JILL SHERMAN, SOCIAL SERVICES CORRESPONDENT

THE NHS

THE Labour party yesterday set out its compromise solution for a more efficient and accountable health service without the strings of the market place attached.

William Waldegrave, the health secretary immediately attacked Labour's health manifesto as "a stale old mish-mash of expensive bribes to the unions" which would lead to escalating costs.

Labour promises to bring an end to the state of bed closures every autumn, by creating a substantial reserve fund that could be given to

hospitals that were treating more patients than planned.

Hospitals would be given "flexible" budgets that could be topped up with the marginal costs of operations, such as drugs and dressings, if they ran out of money.

Robin Cook, Opposition health spokesman, said that the reserve fund, which would be held at region or district level, could be as high as 10 per cent to 15 per cent of the hospital budget, or between £1.8 billion and £2.7 billion.

Hospitals would be able to compete for the pot, although they would have no guaranteed access to extra money. The system, which builds on the existing cash-limited scheme, could however encourage mid-year shrouding by doctors anxious for a share of the funds.

Mr Cook made clear that the aim was to encourage hospitals to use their full capacity—a policy that in the short term would benefit over-bedded London hospitals. In the longer term, hospitals would be built in under-provided areas, particularly in areas of population growth.

Launching the health document *A Fresh Start for Health*, Neil Kinnock confirmed that a Labour government would "repeal" self-governing hospitals and GP budget holders and dismantle any internal market. "Like the British people, we reject the market model of medicine which forces hospitals and doctors to compete against each other for the cheapest treatments."

However, Labour is expected to retain the split between the provider and purchaser of health care that is part of the government's health service reforms.

Under Labour, the purchaser would draw up contracts or "performance agreements" based on the volume of work and quality of care expected. These would be linked to national health targets such as reductions in the number of deaths from lung cancer and coronary heart disease.

District health authorities would be supervised by strategic boards that would set local targets and standards of performance. The document, which has few details in many areas, fails to spell out what would happen if health authorities failed to meet their targets.

Defending his private osteopathy treatment for a neck injury this year, Mr Kinnock said a Labour government would see if alternative medicine could be brought in under the NHS.

Earlier, he pledged to put investment in the health service before tax cuts. "In this country there is now a strong mandate for using available public resources for the public good and in their order of priorities the British people give top place to the need to invest in the health services. We shall honour their mandate."

Although Mr Kinnock pledged more resources for the NHS, he did not spell out how much, indicating merely that Labour would be making "proper provision" to make good underfunding of 2 per cent to 3 per cent over the past 11 years.

The National Association of Health Authorities and Trusts has estimated that NHS underfunding since 1980 has accumulated to £4.5 billion. However yesterday Mr Cook

and Mr Kinnock were careful not to pledge a specific amount, and emphasised that the sum would be spread over the life of a parliament.

Labour's proposal to create a minimum hourly wage has also not been costed for the NHS where some workers now take home less than £100 a week.

Mr Cook said that a Labour government would give priority to health promotion and would draw on recommendations of the Black report on health inequalities. It would ban tobacco advertising, except at the point of sale and bring back free eye tests and dental tests.

"We have examined the NHS and we diagnose a case of chronic neglect aggravated by an acute attack of dogmatism", Mr Cook said.

Labour would set up a new department of health and community care with a separate minister. Although it would adopt the government's plan to give local councils responsibility for community care, it would ringfence money for social services departments.



Cope intends to lick party machine into shape

Chief of staff job for party number two

By RICHARD FORD AND NICHOLAS WOOD

CHRIS Patten has made John Cope, his new deputy at Conservative Central Office, his "chief of staff" and charged him with licking the party machine into shape for the next election.

The new Tory chairman is understood to believe that the replacement of Margaret Thatcher by John Major strengthens the case for either going to the country early or holding on until 1992.

Mr Cope, who moved to central office in last week's reshuffle from the number two slot at the Northern Ireland Office, has been asked by Mr Patten to tighten up the nuts and bolts of party organisation. Mr Cope, a chartered accountant by profession, will concentrate on office management and strengthening the links between central office and constituency parties.

He wants central office staff and agents to play a bigger role in by-election planning. In particular, he wants the party professionals to give local parties more advice and guidance on the pressures generated by a by-election. He would like local associations to pay greater attention to such factors when choosing

CONSERVATIVES

candidates. But he does not intend to interfere in their jealously guarded right to select a potential MP.

Mr Patten and Mr Cope are understood to believe that despite the changes made by their predecessors, there is room for improvement at central office. They believe that the 140 staff at party headquarters could be given a clearer idea of their duties and objectives.

Mr Patten's role will be to deploy his public relations skills to project the more compassionate brand of Conservatism associated with Mr Major.

The new party chairman is also expected to play a bigger role in policy formulation. He is a former head of the central office research department and he is understood to be giving thought to enhancing the department's role in policy-making.

The Tory chairman is understood to be eager to dissuade local parties from taking reprisals against MPs who supported Michael Heseltine in the leadership battle.

Major hint on MPs' hours

By ROBIN OAKLEY, POLITICAL EDITOR

JOHN Major gave tacit encouragement yesterday to demands for an improvement of the working hours and practices of the House of Commons, saying that he would not "stand against" any reform plans produced by the procedure committee.

There is renewed, although so far unco-ordinated, pressure for Westminster's working practices to be changed. During his campaign for the Tory leadership, Douglas Hurd promised urgent priority for reforms in the conduct of parliamentary life. But the difficulties were underlined by Michael Heseltine, who said: "attractive to say, difficult to do", pointing out that any restriction on the hours Parliament sat would risk diminishing the rights of the Opposition to examine and delay legislation. Delay is almost an MP's sole weapon.

But at least MPs will have a longer Christmas holiday this year. John MacGregor, leader of the House, announced yesterday that Parliament will rise on December 20 and not return until January 14.

New post for head of COI

Mike Devereau, director general of the Central Office of Information, has been appointed head of the Government Information Service in addition to his present position.

Downing Street said. That marks a change from the situation under Margaret Thatcher when Bernard Ingham, her chief press officer, was also head of the information service.

Mr Devereau, who is 53, moved from journalism to Whitehall more than 20 years ago. He was appointed director general of the COI last year. In his new post he will have charge of 1,200 information officers serving all parts of government.

MPs debate hanging

John MacGregor, leader of the House, confirmed that MPs would have the opportunity on December 17 to debate all aspects of capital punishment. The debate will arise on new clauses put down to the Criminal Justice bill.

Council cash

Michael Heseltine, the environment secretary, will be laying his proposals for government revenue support for local authorities before the Commons before the Christmas recess, but they will not be debated until the new year, John MacGregor, leader of the House, said.

Angola aid

The government is to provide a further £500,000 in emergency aid for the victims of drought and civil war in Angola, Lynda Chalker, the overseas aid minister, said in a written reply. It brings to £1.5 million the total of relief aid to the country.

Energy 'safe'

John Major said in a Commons written reply that the energy department would remain as a separate department at least until the end of the present Parliament. The prime minister said that his expectation was that the workload would justify its retention.

First bury your capercaillie...

By JOHN WINDER

THE world's largest grouse, the capercaillie, may be at considerable risk from gastronomes.

A suggestion in the House of Lords yesterday that the threatened species is of little interest to shooters because it provides poor sport and poor eating, was rejected by a Liberal Democrat peer who offered what passed for a recipe for this inhabitant of the Scots pine forests.

The recipe: Take one dead capercaillie, bury it for three months and exhumate it. Then cook it. Lord Mackie of Benshie, aged 71, said that very brave people would then find it edible.

On the sporting side, his advice as a keen shot was that the capercaillie approaching at an apparent 15mph was in fact doing a 75mph. That would make it a more sporting proposition.

Lady Nicol, a Labour peer, had started the exchanges by asking why the government had decided

against a ban on shooting the birds which had been due to come into effect in October.

Lord Strathclyde, a Scottish office minister, said that consultation had confirmed that shooting was not an important pressure, and the previously announced ban had not been imposed. The Nature Conservancy Council was following up the consultation with research.

Lady Nicol expressed alarm at the decline in numbers of capercaillie so far as could be judged, to fewer than 2,000 birds. "It is not good to eat and not even good sport." She called for an immediate ban.

Lord Strathclyde said that it was well known that the cause of the decline in capercaillie population was loss of habitat. Sporting estates were interested in extending the habitat. That was why the government had asked for a voluntary ban rather than imposing a statutory one.

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THE ROYAL
MARSDEN
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APPEAL



Ministers rule out ethnic monitoring of justice system

By QUENTIN COWDRY, HOME AFFAIRS CORRESPONDENT

MINISTERS firmly dismissed yesterday the possibility of introducing in the near future widespread ethnic monitoring of decisions taken by the police, probation officers and the courts.

Monitoring would not definitely prove whether the criminal justice system discriminated against racial minorities and would be expensive, John Patten, Home Office minister, told the committee studying the government's Criminal Justice Bill.

Mr Patten said, however, that ministers would view sympathetically the calls from all sides of the committee for the bill to impose a legal duty on the police and other agencies to treat all people equally. MPs are now hopeful that a non-discrimination clause will be written into the legislation, although Opposition members feel that a declaratory statement might have little impact without systematic ethnic monitoring throughout the system.

Mr Patten accepted that allegations of racial bias by the police and other decision-makers required further investigation, but he suggested that the way forward in the short-term was to commission more in-depth surveys.

He said that data already collected did not uniformly

support the claims of bias. For example, while 35 per cent of young Afro-Caribbean prisoners had robbery convictions, compared with 11 per cent of their white counterparts, other figures suggested that courts might be discriminating against whites.

Gerry Birmingham, Labour MP for St Helens South, challenged Mr Patten's claim that ethnic monitoring would be difficult to implement, pointing out that police custody records already detailed the racial background of defendants. The MP, a practising barrister, added: "I have seen first-time offenders who happen to be black get three years on their first offence. I have seen Irish defendants being discriminated against just that little bit more."

Mr Patten pointed out that courts were already bound to treat all defendants equally by

the terms of the judicial oath, and defendants who felt that they had been unfairly treated could always appeal to a higher court. He also felt that Labour's amendment, enshrining a non-discrimination clause in the bill, had been badly drafted. He said later, however, that he sympathised with the spirit of the amendment and indicated that the government might endorse it in some form.

Andrew Mitchell, MP for Gedling and one of four Conservative committee members who have publicly called for a non-discrimination clause to be built into the legislation, said: "The thinking and thrust behind the proposed clause is a worthy one." Terry Dicks, Tory MP for Hayes and Harlington, disagreed. He said that such a clause would amount to a slur on the integrity of the courts.



PETER TREVINO

£20m of heroin found in Turkish lorries

By ROBIN YOUNG

CUSTOMS officers at Dover making a random check on two Turkish lorries found £20 million worth of heroin under the floor boards. The consignment weighed 203kg (446lb), the largest single seizure of heroin made in Britain.

The lorries had travelled the "Balkan route" across Europe before catching the

ferry from Ostend to Dover, without the drugs being found in any intervening border checks. They were loaded with textiles but customs officers made a "cold pull" search and discovered about 100kg of heroin hidden in each.

The seizure, on Friday last week, was more than three times bigger than the previous record of 60kg, which was also

discovered in a Turkish lorry at Dover on October 15. The amount of heroin recovered this year is more than 500kg, the highest annual figure yet.

A Turkish man was being questioned yesterday. Two other men have been charged with illegal importation of heroin and remanded in custody by Dover magistrates until tomorrow.

Pave in the eye: a ten-foot high bronze sculpture of a window cleaner, eyes raised for his next job, stands out among passers-by in a west London street. The work, by Alan Stry, took two months to complete and was commissioned by St Martin's Property Corporation for its newly refurbished Capital House in Chapel Street, which is clad almost entirely in glass.

Stoic who keeps defeatism at bay in a Tehran cell

Letters to friends and relatives from Roger Cooper, Britain's longest-serving Gulf hostage, give an insight to life and conditions in his Tehran prison cell. Connie Sutherland reports

ROGER Cooper, Britain's longest-serving Gulf hostage, starts his sixth year in Evin prison, Tehran, today. He has not had the hotel treatment of Britain's Baghdad hostages, who can drink cocktails and talk to television crews about their plight. However, nor has he been held in total isolation like the other hostages. He is leashed from Beirut chained to radiators, transported in coffins under lorries and treated worse than animals.

His conditions are tolerable, probably more comfortable than those of British remand prisoners crowded three to a cell in a space designed for one. Officially, Mr Cooper is not a hostage at all, just a prisoner "serving his term", though the precise nature of his offence, date of trial or conviction (if any) and length of sentence are still a mystery. Iranian spokesmen have variously denied that he has been tried, have stated in the *majlis* (parliament) that he has been, have announced and retracted a death sentence and have spoken of sentences of ten, 14 and 16 years.

The truth is that since the Iranians accused him of spying and extracted a televised semi-confession from him, the case has been an embarrassment to them. Imprecise spying charges are a common excuse for holding Westerners in the Gulf. In Mr Cooper's case, they emerged over a year after his arrest to justify his continued detention after a British spokesman had made a heavy-handed reference to the case on television.

Mr Hossein Mousavi, Iran's former premier, was guided into justifying the affair by saying that he was held on spying charges. Soon after, the television "confession" was filmed and zealous prison interrogators found further proof. Mr Cooper, aged 55, had had on him a bleeper to call his office in Dubai. That was described as a "long-range communications device capable of reaching Cyprus".

Although his apparently dateless sentence is ageing Mr Cooper, his morale remains high. In August, when talks between Britain and Iran seemed deadlocked, he wrote to a senior Iranian diplomat stating that it would be wrong for the British government to insist on his freedom as a precondition for re-establishing relations. He added that he did not want to be freed by a pardon. He has always declared his innocence and for several years has asked for, but not been given, a judicial review of his case.

He carries on a spirited correspondence with a wide range of friends. At his suggestion they formed a Friends of Roger Cooper Society, and it is from their shared correspondence files that this picture of Mr Cooper's prison life is drawn.

His problems come less from the prison guards, his turnkeys as he calls them, than from fellow prisoners. He chooses his cell-mates, and for most of the first three years he chose solitary confinement, preferring cramped solitude to the option of sharing a cell with

smokers who kept the television blaring all day.

In this period he read voraciously. A letter from August 1987 says: "I'm about two thirds of the way through Shakespeare, which is wonderful. The Bible, though, is a disappointment. What a tale of cruelty, superstition, vice, treachery, genocide and racism." He also amused himself by writing rude anagrams about British politicians, and undertook paid translation work for his captors.

At the end of that time he started translating Ayatollah Khomeini's poetry into English sonnets. One of them was published along with learned notes on its religious symbolism in the English-language *The Tehran Times*.

He has spent some time with a group of foreign prisoners, including a British soldier of fortune, sub-



Cooper: starting his sixth year in captivity

sequently released, who said that Mr Cooper was not popular with the other prisoners because of his friendliness with the prison officers.

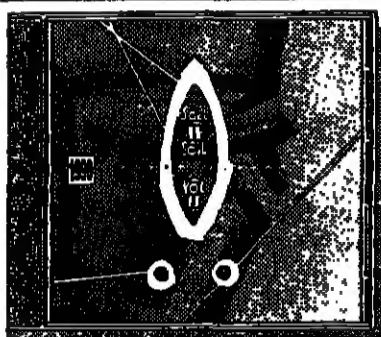
For about a year he was allowed the best of both worlds, keeping his own small cell where he could read, write and study but having the human company of the other prisoners. Now he is again in a shared cell, fortunately without television, but with little privacy. He has, however, recently been allowed to sit in the corridor after lights out, which gives him two or three hours of quiet for letters and serious reading.

In a recent letter he said that he gets on better with his new cellmates, a German and an American. Mr Cooper claims to have a sophisticated palate, in spite of years of captivity. His latest letter complains that "somewhat reluctantly" he has had to take over the cooking from John after I found him putting over precious pasta in insufficient, not quite boiling water then overcooking it and not reheating it after draining. There was some fiction over this but he seemed unwilling to learn and Helmut finally sided with me.

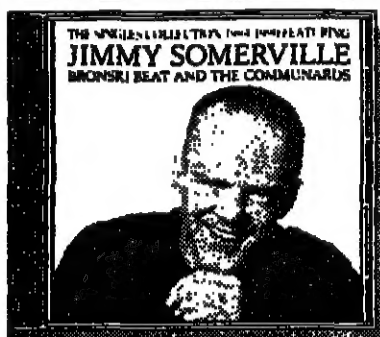
From the tone of his lively letters, there does not seem to be a tough prison routine. It has gone on too long, however. Political contacts, now that Britain and Iran again have diplomatic relations, can smooth over some of the minor inconveniences of prison life, such as arranging regular consular visits, but that is no substitute for freedom, and what remains is a hope that the spiritual authorities who control the Islamic Republic of Iran can recognise his innocence and send him home for Christmas.



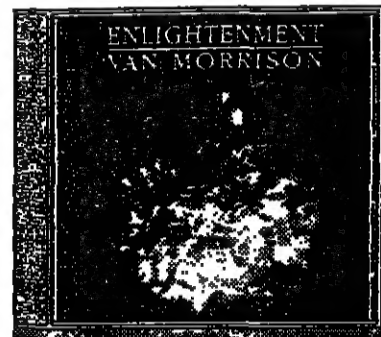
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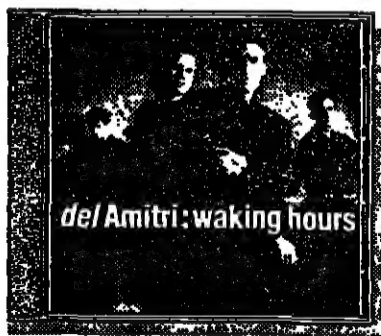


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Stadium 'confusion'

Liverpool football supporters anxious to watch the FA Cup semi-final at Hillsborough were unaware of people being crushed to death in front of them, the inquest into the tragedy was told yesterday. Inspector Gordon Sykes said supporters at the back had no idea what was happening on the terrace.

Mr Sykes was called to the Leppings Lane terrace at the Sheffield ground where 95 fans were crushed to death shortly after the start of the match against Nottingham Forest on April 15 last year. The hearing continues today.

Player accused

Mark Dennis, the Crystal Palace left back, of Streatham, south London, was remanded on bail at Wimbledon yesterday accused of beating and threatening to kill his former wife.

Karate captain

Aiden Trimble, aged 29, has become the youngest fifth dan in the UK in Shotokan Karate. Trimble, a council official from Nottingham, will captain the British team in the World Karate Championships in Dubai later this month.

Shop charges

Richard Madeley, presenter of the Granada television programme *This Morning*, was sent for trial at Manchester yesterday on two charges of shoplifting.

Food firm fined

Plumrose, food manufacturer of Hull, Humberside, was fined £850 at Nottingham yesterday after a bolt was found in past.

Tree stolen

A two-foot bonsai tree, worth £400, has been dug up by thieves from a garden in Lovedean, Hampshire.

Rude awakening

A man who escaped from Stanford Hill prison, Kent, was recaptured yesterday, after being found asleep in a house he had burgled in Andover, Hampshire.

There's more to discover at WHSMITH.

هكذا من الاصل

The enquiry into the Lockerbie air disaster adjourns today and no more evidence will be taken until the new year, after the second anniversary of the crash on December 21.

Kerry Gill and Sue Ellicott report.

\$4m security budget 'cut substantially'

By KERRY GILL

A BUDGET of \$4 million was earmarked to set up Alert, Pan Am's security subsidiary, but this was later substantially reduced by the airline, the judicial enquiry into the Lockerbie disaster was told yesterday.

Wilfrid Wood, who was employed by Pan Am to establish the organisation, said: "At the outset one of the promises was that there would be an unlimited budget. The top line was \$4.02 million (£2.09 million). But in the end the real money spent was \$100,000 in the first year."

Colonel Wood, aged 59, a former British army officer, said he had anti-terrorist experience in the army before he was taken on by Pan Am on January 1, 1987, on a "handshake contract". He said Harry Pizer, the airline's head of corporate security, appeared unwilling to put anything in writing.

"I believe that was because he was keen to avoid anything which might result in his being responsible for security matters," said Colonel Wood. The enquiry was told that a memo to Alert staff from Fred Ford, Pan Am's president, said: "If we do not give the programme a fair chance it could be a very significant embarrassment for us all." Colonel Wood commented that it could be dangerous rather than embarrassing when asked if he concurred with Mr Ford's point of view.

"If you set up a security programme as a sham and people believe in it, you could end up believing in it yourself. It is basically dishonest," he said. Colonel Wood said he had tried to get away from the practice of hiring security staff who were generally considered by fellow workers as below the status of cleaners. He quoted a saying in the security business: "If they can tie their shoe laces, well and good. If they cast a shadow, employ

them." The enquiry, which draws to a close today, will reopen on January 22. Held before Sheriff Principal John Mowat in Easterbrook Hall, part of the Crichton Royal hospital, Dumfries, the enquiry began on October 1 under strict security. Indeed, those entering the red sandstone hall have commented that security is tighter than at most airports.

Fatal accident enquiries, similar to English inquests, are normally held within a sheriff court although a sheriff can hold one wherever he considers it appropriate. In the case of the Lockerbie hearing, the Easterbrook Hall was the only place believed big enough to hold the mass of lawyers, advocates, press and public.

The hospital, founded in 1839, has a world-wide reputation for the care of the mentally ill. Its peak occupancy was after the turn of the century when it had more than a thousand patients; it now



Flashback: the ruined houses and crater in Sherwood Crescent, Lockerbie, caused by the bombing of Pan Am flight 103

has about 450. In the event very few members of the public have attended the enquiry and only a handful of relatives have been prepared to undergo the stress of hearing evidence relating to the bombing. Among those who have attended regularly is Jim Swire, spokesman for the British relatives, who lost his daughter in the disaster.

Sheriff Principal Mowat and the advocates representing a variety of parties, ranging from the Crown to bereaved relatives, sit in gowns and wigs in what has officially been designated a court for the duration of the enquiry. The en-

quiry is expected to continue until early spring.

The sheriff principal will then issue his findings, most probably some time after the enquiry ends. Among them will be where and when the deaths of the 270 people killed took place, the causes of death, reasonable precautions that might have been taken to avoid the tragedy and defects that may have contributed to the deaths.

The most harrowing part of the enquiry was when Sergeant David Johnstone spent days in the witness box giving details of the 270 people killed, where their bodies were discovered and the

cause of death. The circumstances relating to every one of the dead were painstakingly recorded.

John Boyd, Inspector of Constabulary for Scotland, who was chief constable of Dumfries and Galloway at the time of the bombing, said 658 bags of human remains were recovered. They were cremated at a service on January 31 last year. His men, he said, had the task of giving information to relatives. Some reacted with shock, others with frustration as they demanded that bodies be released.

Because of the severe injuries caused to the dead, relatives had

to be dissuaded from seeing victims unless accompanied by medical staff. In the event, only two bodies were identified by relatives and these relatives were doctors.

The scale of the disaster only became apparent hours after the crash. The next morning the hills around Lockerbie were strewn with bodies and debris.

For survivors on the ground the memories of that night can never be purged. John Smith, a retired policeman aged 76, entered the court with a stick, his hands still wrapped in medicinal mittens.

He had dragged his injured wife, Janet, aged 75, from their blazing home in Sherwood Crescent, the worst-affected area of the town where part of the plane crashed and exploded. A policeman described the explosion as being like a miniature atomic bomb.

Mr and Mrs Smith were watching television when the crash occurred. He told the enquiry that flaming aviation fuel belched down from the ceiling and he became separated from his wife by a wall of flame.

Few obvious reminders of the disaster remain in Lockerbie. The crater caused by the fuselage has been grassed over. The notice board that daily recorded the dead taken to the makeshift morgue at the town hall now bears lists of intended marriages. It is in Dryfessdale cemetery that memories linger, little cellophane parcels protecting victims' photographs and mementoes recovered from the hills.

Crew families to sue for 'pre-crash terror'

LAWYERS acting for three crew members of the Boeing 747 that blew up over Lockerbie with the loss of 270 lives will raise court actions in New York next June against the security company employed by Pan Am (Kerry Gill writes). They expect to win damages amounting to several million pounds for each of the crew members' families.

Judson Francis, the families' lawyer, said they would seek damages for the loss incurred by the families and the pre-crash terror experienced by the crew who, they will argue, regained consciousness 20,000ft above the ground and may have lived for a short time after falling to earth.

Mr Francis said last night that the three people for whom his firm was acting showed no evidence of

the explosion but clearly had been made unconscious by the cold air and lack of oxygen. According to Dr Jerome Schneider, an expert witness who will give evidence before a US district court, they would have come round at between 20,000ft and 18,000ft and would have experienced the terror of falling to their deaths.

It has been established in US courts that the family of someone who suffered "pre-crash terror" can claim substantial damages. The family of a pilot whose plane crashed near Fort Worth won \$100,000 damages when it was proved that he lived for 20 seconds before hitting the ground.

Mr Francis said the actions alleging negligence would be brought against Alert, the security company employed by Pan Am,

and Pan Am World Services. Pan Am World Services, a wholly owned subsidiary of Pan Am Corporation, was sold off in May last year but was the company that employed Alert. The actions are on behalf of the families of Jerry Avritt, a flight engineer, and Lilibeth Macalooly and Jocelyn Reina, air stewardesses.

At Dumfries the judicial enquiry into the disaster has heard numerous allegations of mistakes and negligence concerning security at Frankfurt airport, from where the bomb was believed to have originated.

The head of Pan Am's security at Frankfurt was said to have been unfit for his job and was dismissed 24 weeks after the bombing. His employers found of irregularities including the disappearance of

DM100,000 (about £35,000) for which he was responsible.

A former Alert employee told the enquiry that security at Heathrow airport was totally inadequate at the time of the disaster. David Cooke said he was so badly paid that he could not remember how much he earned, adding that no meaningful training was given by Alert.

A Pan Am employee said that he was aware that unaccompanied baggage was placed on board flight 103 when it left Heathrow. Later during the enquiry Daniel Sonson, the deputy head of Pan Am's corporate security operation, denied that his instruction to allow flights to depart from Frankfurt and Heathrow with unsearched, unaccompanied baggage had been grossly irresponsible.

Bomber identified as Libyan, says Cable News

From SUSAN ELLICOTT IN WASHINGTON

INVESTIGATORS of the Pan Am flight 103 disaster have identified the bomber as a Libyan intelligence agent and will issue indictments soon, according to the US television station Cable News Network.

In a special documentary this week the network reported that the suspect was a male colleague of another Libyan agent identified as Mohammed al-Naydi, who also uses the name Mohammed al-Marzouk. The programme was aired two weeks after a former director of operations at the Central Intelligence Agency's counter-terrorism unit said the US was close to laying charges against those responsible for the bombing.

On Wednesday CNN reported that Mr al-Naydi was arrested in February 1988 in Dakar, Senegal, in possession of bomb timing devices that matched those discovered among the debris of the crash. The network added that Ahmed Jibril, the Syrian-backed Palestinian leader, recruited the suspected agent, whom it did not name, because he did not want to trust fellow Palestinians to carry out the bombing. The suspect went to Malta in November 1988 where he packed a suitcase including the plastic explosives that blew up the flight.

The unaccompanied case was sent to Frankfurt, where it was loaded onto a Pan Am flight to London, then transferred to Pan Am flight 103 to New York. Investigators believe the bomb was disguised in a portable cassette player in the suitcase.

Mr Jibril has long been the chief Lockerbie suspect. Previous evidence by American intelligence officials to congressional hearings have hinted that they considered his organisation was behind the bomb attack.

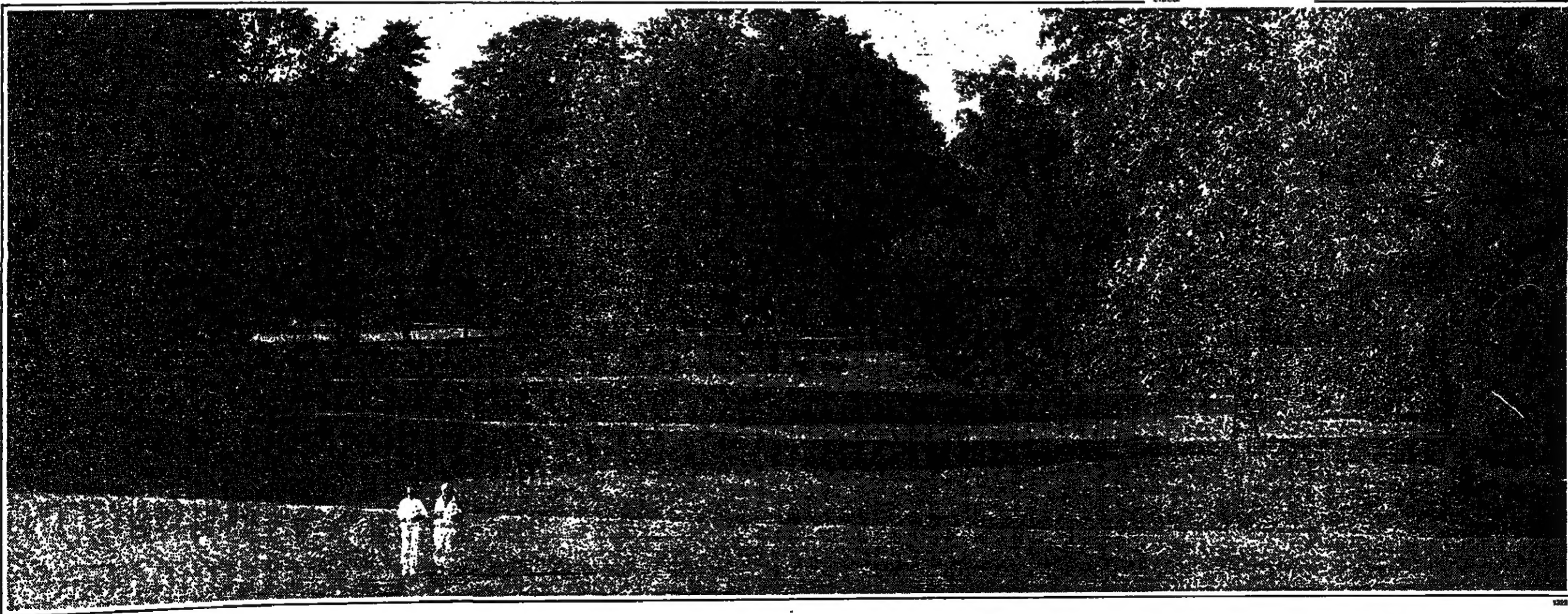
Recently, however, officials in Washington have suggested a different hypothesis, that Mr Jibril handed the job over to a Libyan group.

The Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine - General Command, which is led by Mr Jibril, has consistently denied it was responsible for the attack.

The US Justice Department declined comment yesterday on the CNN report.

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FROM ROGER BOYES IN WARSAW

But the crucial battle in the campaign has been for the support of the Catholic Church leadership. It is this

Both candidates tried to claim the moral high ground, but the result has been even more chaotic than when they were slingng mud. Mr. Walesa could point to a stable marriage, eight children and a long connection with the Church and the pope. Mr. Tyminski by contrast divorced his first, Finnish wife and married the wife of his best friend in Peru. He had two children with her before marrying her. Such unorthodox arrangements are not unusual in modern Poland, but they still have shock value in the Catholic-dominated countryside.

**From MICHAEL BONYON IN BRUSSELS**

John Gummer, the agriculture minister, said there was no way that America and its allies would be allowed to destroy the fabric of the policy, which had brought such spectacular prosperity and stability to Europe's farmers over the past 30 years. Some subsidies were essential

Raymond MacSharry, the European Community agriculture commissioner, went further. "I'll tell you what others want. They think the EC should not produce any food at all. They think we should produce less, export less and import more. It ain't

The proposed changes are not yet all on the table. But they are likely to tighten further the eligibility for subsidies, link payments more closely to the market, take more land out of production, induce farmers to leave the land with cash compensation and enforce tougher rules on environmental protection.

**By PAUL BOMPARD
IN ROME AND
OUR FOREIGN STAFF**

A witness said the plane was already in flames as it came gliding down. It passed between two blocks of flats and then smashed through the side of the Salvemini Vocational School and burst into flames.

The air force named the pilot as Bruno Viviani, aged 24, who was on a training flight from Verona, 60 miles from Bologna. It said he was taken to the Maggiore hospital with fractures of three vertebrae.

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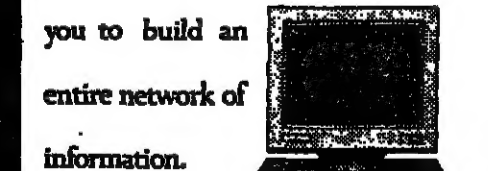
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By PHILIP JACOBSON

posed a relatively new party, the Groupement Républicain, as representing the centrist tendency of the RPR. Mme Barzach, aged 47, and M Noir, aged 46 — respectively the former minister of health and the former minister for trade — were among the more prominent younger politicians jockeying for position as dissatisfaction with their party leadership increased. They were both critical yesterday of conservative policies, arguing that their party had failed the voters: M Noir, who remains a member of the Lyonnais "outmoded political structures" and appealed to fellow RPR deputies to follow him in "a vast national somersault", while Mme Barzach expressed profound dismay at "the

Their resignations come at a particularly awkward moment for the RPR leader, Jacques Chirac: the former prime minister has been struggling to hold his party together while continuing the long-running feud with Valéry Giscard d'Estaing, head of France's other main opposition grouping, the centre-right Union pour la Démocratie Française. They were publicly at odds again only two days ago over the right conservative policy on France and the European Community.

While neither Mme Barzach nor M Noir were in any position to threaten M Chirac's iron grip on the RPR, their abrupt departure, with so public a show of discontent, further underlines the weaknesses of France's second-largest parliamentary party. Constant internal bickering, periodic efforts to challenge the leadership, and the virtual absence of serious alternative policies have allowed the minority Socialist government a comparatively easy ride since early 1988.

FROM PHILIP JACOBSON IN PARIS

ONE newspaper, above all, is an institution in France. There are those who find *Le Monde* essential reading, others who find it essentially unreadable, but on that one point there is agreement. Commonly described as austere, this afternoon newspaper, with a circulation of nearly 400,000, is far and away the most influential in public life, above all in politics.

But it is *Le Monde's* own affairs that will make headlines today at a special shareholders' meeting to try to resolve an embarrassing conflict over who is to replace André Fontaine, its distinguished editor and chief executive. The misguided will again attempt to thrust out a compromise that does least damage to the paper's high standing and avert serious financial difficulties.

Earlier this week, in what many *Le Monde* journalists saw as a blow to their cherished independence, a general meeting of shareholders refused to accept M. Fontaine's chosen successor, Daniel Veruet. At present editorial director, he enjoys widespread support among staff but fell far short of gaining the required 75 per cent approval. The stiff opposition from *Le Monde's* outside shareholders to his

appointment, almost a year after M Fontaine had first nominated him, is explained in part by the newspaper's balance sheet.

Although sales have been rising comfortably since the mid-1980s, and no other French newspaper enjoys such prestige abroad, *Le Monde* is expected to end 1990 at least 40 million francs (£4 million) in the red, alongside accumulated debts of around 300 million francs.

The central problem is that the newspaper, founded in December 1944 under General de Gaulle's patronage, has precious little revenue from other sources. Plans to land a contract for printing the tabloid daily, *Le Parisien*, at *Le Monde's* costly new plant outside Paris were sunk by technical troubles.

What comes next is anyone's guess, though M Vernet appears to have lost his chance: there is talk of going to an suitably impressive outsider, with the name of Roger Fauroux, the industry minister, doing the rounds. On the other hand, there are rumours that M Fontaine, whose term does not expire officially until the end of next year, could be persuaded without difficulty to stay on.

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هكذا في الأصل

Successor to Ershad pledges early poll as mobs seek revenge

By CHRISTOPHER THOMAS

PRESIDENT Ershad of Bangladesh resigned yesterday and handed over power to a caretaker leader, fulfilling a pledge to opposition leaders who had waged a seven-week campaign of strikes and demonstrations against him.

A general election is to be held within 90 days. Mr Ershad, a former general who seized power in a bloodless coup eight years ago, administered the oath of office to Shahabuddin Ahmed, nominated by opposition parties as acting president. He is chief justice of the supreme court.

The oath was administered in Mr Ershad's house inside Dhaka's military cantonment, a heavily guarded complex of offices and houses. Afterwards Mr Ahmed, aged 62, held talks with opposition leaders. His

appointment was originally to have been approved by parliament tomorrow, but in one of his final acts Mr Ershad dissolved the body because few MPs were willing to risk appearing in public. Two-thirds of MPs belong to his Jatiya party, and they feared being attacked by crowds.

Mr Ahmed was chosen unanimously by the three main opposition parties to succeed Mr Ershad, who had threatened to boycott elections promised in May unless the government was first dissolved. They said the Ershad administration would not have permitted a free and fair election. Mr Ahmed is the eleventh president since Bangladesh, formerly East Pakistan, came into being as an independent country in

1971. According to Bangladesh radio, he has no desire for a political career and will return to the bench after the elections.

"My task will be to hold parliamentary elections as soon as possible and transfer power to a democratic government," he told a news conference after his appointment. He would, he said, institute legal reforms to dismantle the apparatus of one-man rule.

Mr Ershad is expected to contest the forthcoming elections. His party is calculating that the opposition groups, whose fierce rivalries have been subsumed into a concerted joint campaign against the government, will now start to argue among themselves.

A wave of vengeance killings has been reported against Mr Ershad's supporters, and the former general has virtually confined himself to the security of his home. Thousands of people gathered at Dhaka international airport to stop government leaders leaving the country. There were angry scenes when it was rumoured that Mr Ershad's wife and son had left the country.

Police said mobs had attacked the former leader's supporters. Earlier this week crowds set fire to his party headquarters in central Dhaka, and the homes of his government ministers have come under attack in the capital and the city of Chittagong.

Four people were killed yesterday as the public's anger against supporters of the fallen government continued to take its toll. Police said that a man was murdered at a rally in central Dhaka. Three others were lynched in southern Bangladesh.

For the past two days huge crowds have been celebrating in Dhaka with drums, bugles and national flags after Mr Ershad's earlier announcement that he would step down and clear the way for elections. There are widespread demands for Mr Ershad and his supporters to be put on trial.

Rumours have been circulating that Mr Ershad may be allowed to leave the country. Some news agencies reported, however, that he was being confined against his will to his home, which opposition leaders denied. According to one account, the army had refused his request to be supplied with a helicopter.

Sikh militants kill Punjab journalist

From CHRISTOPHER THOMAS IN DELHI

ALL India Radio's station director in the Punjab capital of Chandigarh was shot dead by unidentified gunmen yesterday in the first sign of a new assault on journalists and the media.

The death of Rajinder Kumar Talib came after journalists received a warning last month not to use the word "terrorist" in describing the groups waging an armed campaign in the state. It said they must be called militants. Those violating the instruction would be killed.

All India Radio described the killers as "terrorists" when it reported the murder in its news bulletins yesterday. Journalists in Punjab have said they would ignore the so-called code of conduct issued by the groups, but in practice the press has mostly abandoned the word terrorist.

The Sikh Panthic committee, the separatists' underground "cabinet", said the groups should be called "militants, Khalistani freedom fighters or Khalistani mujahedin". The Panthic committee must not be described as "Pakistan-based". It ordered news agencies to give more news from the "land of Khalistan" and declared journalists were free to report the "weaknesses of the mil-

itants and their organisations". It said the leaders of five Sikh organisations could seek explanations for reports. Journalists would be free to submit complaints to the committee.

The five-member committee also said this week that the Punjab government and all semi-government organisations should use only the Punjabi language in official work from December 10.

The Panthic committee said it would not tolerate the imposition of alien culture or any disrespect to the Punjabi language. The culture, language and religion of Punjab had been undermined.

In Ayodhya, Hindus marched on a disputed holy site yesterday, watched by thousands of security forces, in the second threatened assault on an ancient mosque in a month.

Paramilitary police surrounded the building and arrested about 1,200 demonstrators who were later released.

The relatively peaceful protest has given breathing space to the government to try to work out a permanent solution to the dispute. The government wants both sides to accept the findings of a judicial inquiry into the history of the site.



Opening act: Elizabeth Taylor, aged 57, sitting impassively in a Los Angeles court during jury selection in the lawsuit between the actress and her former boyfriend, Henry Wynberg, aged 56. He is seeking a share in profits from her Passion perfume.

Brooklyn police get better of pistol-packing kid, aged 3

From CHARLES BRENNER IN NEW YORK

A THREE-year-old brought an unusual toy to his nursery school class in Brooklyn this week — a .25 calibre automatic pistol. When police disarmed the boy, they found the weapon had one bullet in the chamber ready for firing and three more in the magazine.

"He was real scared when the police showed up," said a teacher. "He is just a little boy." The toddler, who found the gun in his family car, broke by three years the record for the youngest gunslinger in town. In January, a six-year-old was picked up with a loaded revolver.

The incident prompted little surprise in a city witnessing an accelerating surge of savagery that now seems to have overwhelmed the police. The murder toll for this year

passed 2,000 on Sunday, the highest in New York's history.

Allowing for the traditional seasonal surge in the killing, about 180 more citizens are expected to be shot or knifed to death by New Year's Day.

One sad symptom of the violent times is the debut of a group of seasonal songsters called the Children of Homicide Victims' Chorus. To qualify for entry, children must have suffered the loss of a close family member by murder. The city's Victims' Services Agency says the choir, which numbers 20 between the ages of five and 15, provides mutual healing. William Spies, aged 11, whose mother was killed by a murderer on parole, said: "When you find out other people went through the same thing, it makes you feel more support." Mayor David Dinkins has unveiled an anti-crime package, which will eventually add 3,000 officers to the city's beleaguered police force.

Blacks demand action by Pretoria

From GAVIN BELL IN JOHANNESBURG

BLACK power took to the streets of South Africa yesterday in a boisterous demonstration of impatience with the pace of government reforms.

Marching under the banners of the African National Congress and the South African Communist Party, tens of thousands of township dwellers converged on President de Klerk's offices in Pretoria, and town halls and police headquarters in other cities, to demand an interim government, immediate release of political prisoners, and the early return of exiles.

Despite government warnings that it would deal firmly with intimidation and violence, permission was granted for the demonstrations, the police kept a low profile and no incidents were reported.

The national campaign, under the slogan "peace and freedom now", is the first concerted mass action staged by the ANC since the organisation was unbanned in February, and is due to last until the new year. Planned events include a "mass visit" to Robben Island prison, off Cape Town, and candlelight marches to police stations throughout the country.

A petition delivered to Mr de Klerk's office and police stations yesterday said an upsurge of political violence had demonstrated that apartheid was still in place and (black) people had no access to legislative power. "The time has come — and the time is now — to end the steel ring of apartheid around our neck," it said.

The document accused the government of failing to reciprocate after the ANC's suspension of its "armed struggle" by releasing all political prisoners and permitting the return of exiles.

"The little trust that was beginning to emerge has been wiped out," it said. "Your motives are becoming suspect, and our people are questioning your sincerity and our wisdom in negotiating with you."

Holiday truce by Salvador rebels

San Salvador — Left-wing Salvadorean rebels have announced truces in the capital for Christmas Day and New Year's Day.

They were announced by Nidia Diaz, the rebel leader, in an interview with the independent YSKL radio station. A 17-day wave of attacks by the rebel Farabundo Marti National Liberation Front has claimed at least 200 lives and wounded more than 400 people.

The rebel leader said: "This is a unilateral truce... not an agreed one." President Cristiani has said the government would agree to a Christmas truce. (Reuters)

Poll victors flee Rangoon

Rangoon — Ten politicians, who have been accused of trying to set up an illegal government in Burma, have fled from the capital, according to the state-run newspaper, *The Working People's Daily*, available in Bangkok.

The ten are members of the Burmese National League for Democracy, whose landslide victory in elections in May has been ignored so far by the military rulers of the country. (Reuters)

Chinese visit

Peking — Wan Li, aged 74, the chairman of China's parliament, who postponed a visit to Britain last month saying he was ill, has recovered and will make the trip at a later date, a government official said. (Reuters)

Homeless exile

Yaoundé — Hissène Habré, aged 48, the ousted president of Chad who fled to Cameroon, is looking for a country to grant him asylum, official sources said here. (Reuters)

Haitian blast

Port-au-Prince — An explosion at a rally for Father Jean-Bertrand Aristide, a progressive Haitian Roman Catholic priest running for president, has killed five people and injured 54, according to Haitian radio. (Reuters)

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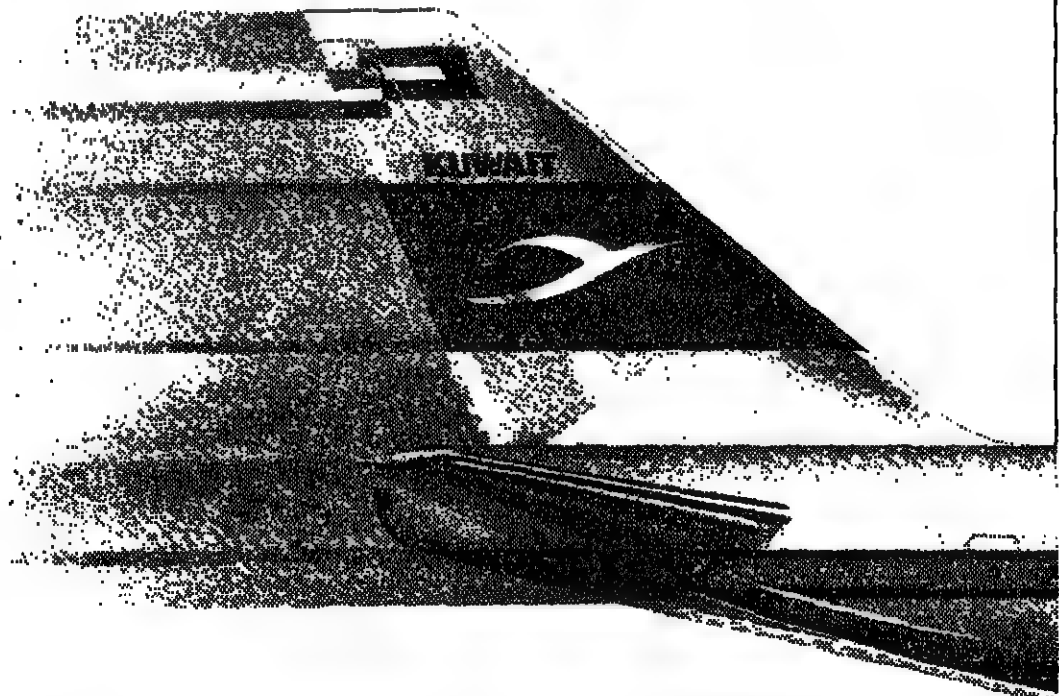


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Cautious Bush says America must keep the pressure on Iraq

FROM SUSAN ELLICOTT IN WASHINGTON

THE United States cautiously welcomed President Saddam's reported offer yesterday to release all foreign hostages held in Iraq but stopped short of saying the move marked a shift in Baghdad's resolve.

"I hope it's credible," President Bush said soon after arriving in Santiago during a week-long tour of Latin America. "No single hostage should have been taken in the first place," he said.

"I hope it shows that the strategy is working and that Saddam understands that his hostage policy has incurred the condemnation of the whole world. We have got to keep the pressure on."

Mr Bush's comments came one day after he had seen "no evidence" that the Iraqi leader was ready to comply fully and unconditionally with United Nations resolutions aimed at ending the conflict without war. He also said he was not optimistic that direct talks between the United States and Iraq would produce a peaceful resolution of the Gulf situation.

President Saddam's concession on the hostages also came after broadcast reports that Washington would support a United Nations Security Council move to call an international conference on the Middle East aimed at resolving the dispute over the Israeli occupied territories.

James Baker, the American Secretary of State, appearing before Congress to discuss the United States' Gulf policy for the second time this week,

said America had not shifted its policy towards a possible conference. In the past, Washington has made clear it is not inflexible towards such a conference, but would only favour one under appropriate circumstances. The Bush administration has refused to acquiesce to President Saddam's demands that a resolution of the Gulf conflict be



Baker: policy on possible conference has not shifted

linked to a solution of the Arab-Israeli conflict.

"This is certainly not an appropriate time for an international conference," Mr Baker told the House foreign affairs committee. "We are not now recommending that one be held. Nor are we supporting a resolution for the United Nations to convene such a conference."

Later, Mr Baker told the panel that Iraq's foreign ministry had confirmed President Saddam's offer to America's acting ambassador in Bag-

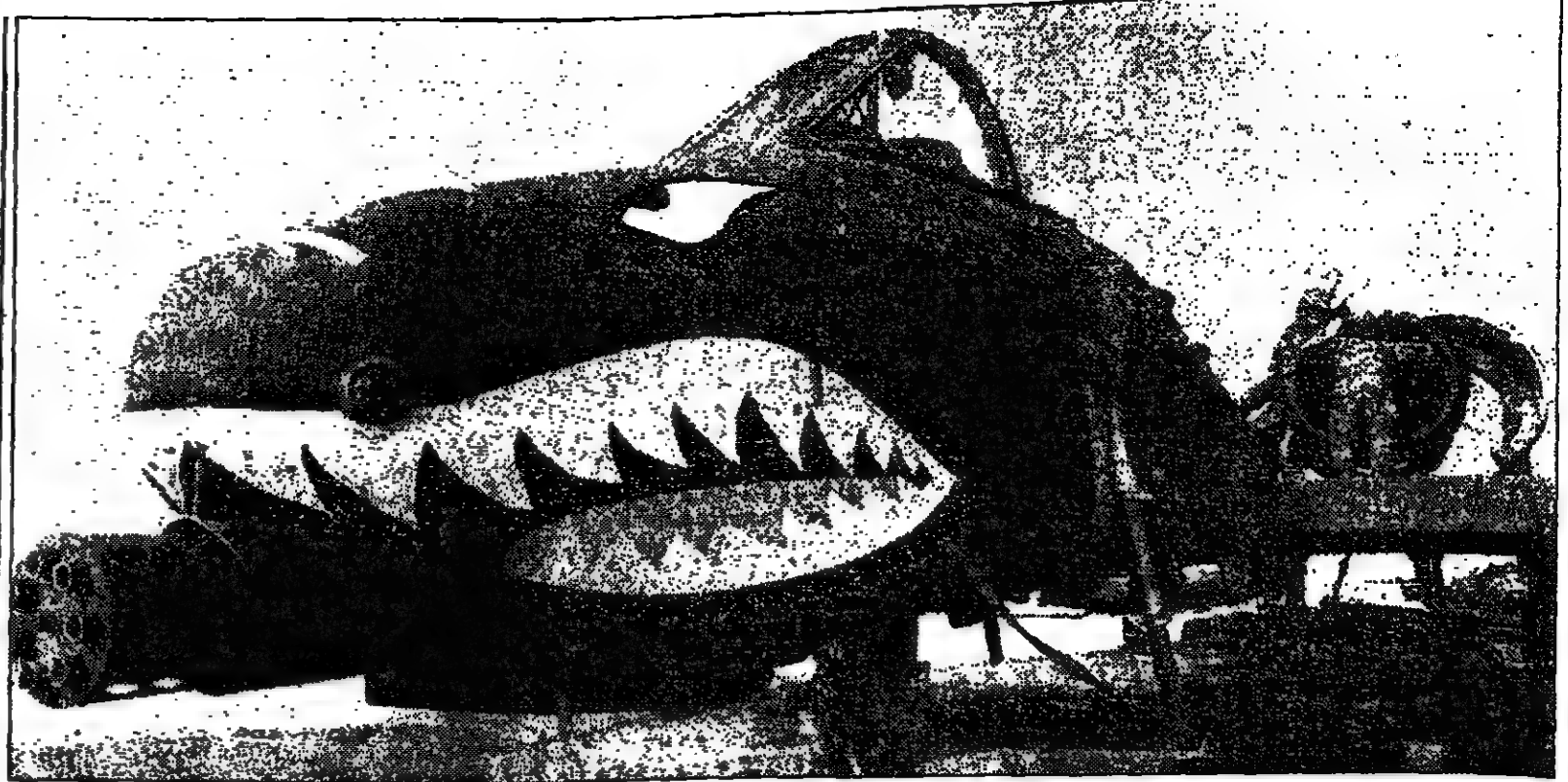
dad, Joseph Wilson, who telephoned the state department. The Iraqi president issued his offer in a letter to his National Assembly, ordering the parliament to allow the hostages to go home in time for Christmas and the New Year.

The White House said it would do "what is necessary to get our people out" if the offer was true. In his letter, President Saddam said he was seeking the release of the hostages in response to efforts by American congressional Democrats to call a vote on a resolution granting Mr Bush prior approval for war, appeals from Arab leaders and Mr Bush's unexpected invitation last week to hold talks with Iraq's foreign minister, Tariq Aziz, in Washington.

Mr Baker is due to travel to Baghdad to hold talks with President Saddam at an undecided date between December 15 and January 15. The Bush administration has described the high-level mission as Iraq's final and best chance for a peaceful end to the confrontation before a United Nations deadline authorising the use of force if Iraqi troops have not pulled out of Kuwait. But it has emphasised the meetings will be talks and not negotiations.

President Bush said the release of hostages would not pave the way for a face-saving deal for the Iraqi leader.

Stole in call, page 8
Hitting the nerve, page 14
Diary, page 14
Leading article, page 15



Jaws of war: American air force ground staff of the 23rd Tactical Fighter Wing from Louisiana working on an engine of an A10 Thunderbolt aircraft in Saudi Arabia. Designed to destroy tanks, the plane has a special nose-mounted 30mm cannon

Initiative gets welcome from Kremlin

FROM MARY DEEVSKY IN MOSCOW

MOSCOW yesterday gave a cautious welcome to the news that President Saddam had offered to release all Western hostages. The foreign ministry spokesman, Vitali Churkin, said Moscow was checking the report before giving its formal response.

He had announced earlier that 242 Soviet citizens were being allowed to leave Iraq and that more were expected to leave shortly. Moscow complained last week that Baghdad had broken an agreement to allow 1,000 Soviet specialists and their families to leave Iraq during November.

The indications of move-

ment in the Gulf conflict, if confirmed, will come as welcome relief in Moscow, where the Soviet Union's pro-Western policy is coming under increasing domestic pressure. The original divisions within the military and the foreign policy establishments over the break with Iraq have not healed and the internal situation in the Soviet Union has deteriorated, strengthening the anti-reform lobby.

In the past two weeks, members of the Soviet parliament have asked for fresh assurances that the Soviet Union would take no part in any military intervention

against Iraq and that Soviet troops would not be deployed in the region. President Gorbachev was asked for such assurances as recently as Tuesday, when he answered questions in parliament on changes to the constitution.

On the same day, the prime minister, Nikolai Ryzhkov, told the semi-official news agency Interfax that he was absolutely opposed to the Soviet Union playing any part in military action in the Gulf. "Our experience in Afghanistan and Czechoslovakia," he said, echoing the sentiments of many Russians, "is too recent for the public to accept

renewed military involvement abroad."

Not all the objections to Soviet involvement in the use of military force are so innocent, however. Some conceal ulterior domestic political motives, focusing on the status of the Soviet parliament and the person of Eduard Shevardnadze, the foreign minister, who last week cast the Soviet vote in favour of a United Nations Security Council deadline for Iraq to leave Kuwait.

A group of deputies, apparently orchestrated by the conservative-led group, Soyuz (Union), called for Mr Shevardnadze to appear before parliament to explain himself. They claimed his UN vote was tantamount to approval for the use of force and should have been approved in advance by parliament.

This change was considered serious enough by the foreign ministry to warrant a statement reiterating Soviet policy and the constitutional position. Absolving Mr Shevardnadze of violating the constitution, the statement said any Soviet military involvement in the Gulf would have to be approved by parliament. It mentioned an exception which combined a warning to Iraq and a loophole for President Gorbachev.

According to this, the president is authorised to act alone in an "emergency" and, according to the foreign ministry, the harming of a single

Soviet citizen in Iraq would constitute such an emergency.

So detailed a statement suggested that the demands voiced by Soyuz had much broader support and that if the Soviet parliament were to vote on the deployment of Soviet troops in the Gulf, it would vote against. Such a vote would reflect not only popular opposition to the use of Soviet troops abroad, but would be seen as an affirmation by parliament of its power — power which many deputies fear will be diminished by President Gorbachev's changes in the leadership structure.

The foreign ministry's sensitivity to criticism of Soviet Gulf policy was shown again on Wednesday, when an anti-war demonstration by 30 people outside the foreign ministry was taken seriously enough to warrant a foreign ministry representative receiving leaders of the demonstration. The demonstration was organised by the All-Russian Committee, an alliance that Soyuz has forged with more moderate sections of the Communist Party and non-party groups in the case of "saving the country".

The Soyuz group and its allies appear to be using the Gulf issue, where they can command much public support, to undercut the position of the foreign ministry and of Mr Shevardnadze, in particular.

Testing times at Armageddon dress rehearsal

FROM CHRISTOPHER WALKER IN DHAHRAN

Joining your first instruction course in the use of the NCB (nuclear, chemical, biological) suits that many of the 300,000-strong allied forces waiting for possible battle in the Saudi desert have to wear in combat is a sure way of appreciating the troops' feelings.

Yesterday I joined a class of 20 Westerners being shown by a British expert how to operate the unwieldy suits and the various macabre gadgets that go with them, including the so-called "combi-pens" — needles with which you inject belladonna into your leg in the event of being caught in an attack without warning.

"Never waste your own combi-pens to inject a colleague already affected by chemical agents; just try to get him to hospital as quickly as possible," we were told. Also to be carried at all times were relaxant pills, known as Naps — nerve agent pre-treatment set.

The course was one of scores in Saudi Arabia, where the NCB suit has overtaken the gold-plated Cadillac as the preferred status symbol. One British company, Avon Industrial Polymers, has sold more than 50,000 at \$650 (£340) each since the Gulf confrontation began.

Because of the necessity of having a correct-fitting respirator, some journalists have shaved off their beards to increase safety. Others have taken to daily rehearsals with their unfamiliar clothing in their hotel rooms. A Dhahran firm, Alruqee, which advertised American-made Chemrel Max NCB suits ("the ultimate chemical protection") in the Arab News has been inundated with orders.

It is estimated that masks must be donned successfully within nine

seconds to guarantee safety in the event of Armageddon. Minutes after opening the camouflage suit exported from Britain, I was told by the instructor that the respirator was a size too small, therefore useless, and my spare filter (a potential life-saver) lacked its essential vacuum wrapping.

If the black plastic straw connected to the water bottle broke, we were to shut our eyes, breathe in, pull up the respirator, drink, pull it back, breathe out and shout "Gas, gas, gas", in that order (I think). Although the NCB suits may be complex, their possession is regarded as more valuable now than the gold to be found in the neighbouring souks. "If real trouble begins, people may have to shoot to keep those without suits and masks trying to grab them from those who have them," a military official said.

The Saudi authorities claim they will be able to give five minutes' warning of an incoming Scud, but Western experts doubt this.

Depending on the chemical agent, the suit can give protection for many hours. Incongruous-looking pads of fuller's earth are provided to decontaminate parts of the body which might get exposed, with the method, to be learnt by rote, of "blot, bang, rub".

Bits of paper which turn red, amber or green depending on which chemical is dripping on or wafting around are also provided, but glue to attach them to the suit must be provided by the wearer. As well as facing the additional hazard of incoming fire, combat troops wearing the suits in the field must also wear body armour and two layers of clothing beneath.

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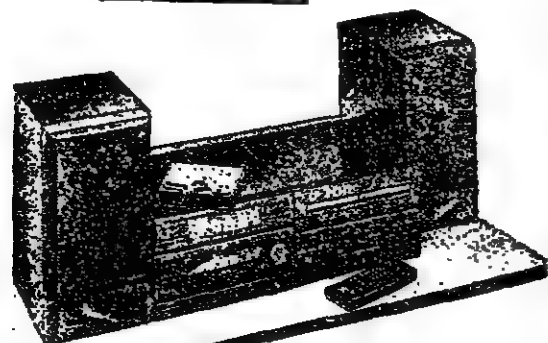
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مكتبة من الاصل

Baghdad loses its hostages gamble

By MICHAEL EVANS AND ALICE THOMSON

THE decision by President Saddam Hussein to release all foreign hostages immediately is more than just a clever "goodwill" propaganda ploy. The Iraqi leader appears to have convinced himself that the presence of hostages in Kuwait and Iraq will not prevent the Americans from attacking his forces. President Bush and other Western leaders have always made it clear that the hostages could not be a deterrent to an attack.

When he began his "human shield" policy, President Saddam clearly believed he would buy himself time, giving him a chance to build up his defences in Kuwait in preparation for an American attack. Now he has released them before he has finished his task. Iraqi troops are still extending the obstacle belt of mines, wire and sand berms (mounds), across into southern Iraq, to prevent an allied flanking attack.

In reality, the Americans have never yet been in a position to go on the offensive. Two months after the invasion of Kuwait, the US had only 100,000 troops in the region. Although offensive planning has been under way for several weeks, the US forces will not be ready to mount an attack until January 15, the deadline set by the UN Security Council resolution, authorising force.

Although he spends most of his time in one of half a dozen bunkers, President Saddam has been a keen follower of CNN, the American television network. So, assuming his staff provide him with Arabic transcripts each day, he will have been under no illusion that his hostage policy was winning him few friends.

He thought he could release them in small groups of

different nationalities, in an attempt to curry favour with selected countries. Although he freed some Americans and British, he focused particularly on countries he hoped would have influence in restraining President Bush from attacking his forces. German and French hostages were selected for this purpose.

Last month Iraq allowed all 262 French hostages to go home as a reward for what he saw as French interest in a peaceful settlement. While each country welcomed the release of hostages, President Saddam gained nothing in return. France said French troops would take part in an offensive, if there was a war.

The arrival of eminent but retired politicians in Baghdad to bring plane-loads of hostages back home also incurred the wrath of all governments who were members of the anti-Iraq coalition. The traffic became so heavy that earlier this month Willy Brandt, the former West German chancellor, on his way out bumped into Anker Jorgensen, the former Danish prime minister, on his way in at Baghdad airport.

President Waldheim of Austria broke the taboo on direct contact with President Saddam and made a much criticised visit to Baghdad in August, securing the release of 96 Austrians. After that there was no stopping what read like an international *Who's Who*—Edward Heath, Yasuhiro Nakasone, the former Japanese prime minister, David Lange, the former New Zealand prime minister.

The timing of President Saddam's decision to free all the hostages has everything to do with the planned visit to Baghdad of James Baker, US secretary of state. The Iraqi leader will be able to tell him



Ways out: Tom Uren, top left, the Australian former MP, celebrating in Amman yesterday with compatriot hostages whose freedom he won in Baghdad. Above, left to right, other politicians who have been successful on similar missions: Willy Brandt, Yasuhiro Nakasone, Edward Heath, Kurt Waldheim, and David Lange

that he has honoured one of the UN resolutions, in the hope that he can extend the January 15 deadline.

President Saddam decided on his hostage policy two weeks after the invasion of Iraq. On August 16, all Americans and Britons in Kuwait were instructed to report to designated hotels for dispatch to civilian and military in-

stallations. President Saddam played his cards cautiously, using the hostages like gambling chips. Twice he has offered them all, but it was always on the understanding that the US would not launch an attack.

In September, President Saddam allowed all women and children to leave Iraq and last month wives were told

they could visit their husbands in Iraq at Christmas.

"President Saddam has got all the mileage he can out of the hostages," Sir Anthony Parsons, former British ambassador to Iran and to the United Nations said yesterday. "At first they may have had some effect, but now he is only harming his own cause. The hostage question

may have provided a link with older Western diplomats but ultimately he hasn't blown public opinion off course."

Roger Owen, of St Antony's College, Oxford, said that now negotiations looked feasible, the hostages would become counter-productive, and by releasing them President Saddam could put pressure on Mr Bush to talk seriously.

Force threat still hangs over Saddam

By PHILIP WEBSTER, CHIEF POLITICAL CORRESPONDENT

DOUGLAS Hurd, the foreign secretary, said last night that the threat of force against President Saddam Hussein remained, despite his promise to allow foreign hostages to leave. As he welcomed the news from Baghdad, both he and the prime minister told the Iraqi leader that he should still withdraw unconditionally from Kuwait and allow the legitimate government to return.

Mr Hurd told the Commons: "If President Saddam Hussein does not comply in full with the security council resolutions, then he will be forced to do so. If he does comply, he will not be attacked."

At the same time John Major welcomed the apparent decision as wonderful news for hostages and families who had endured so much. The prime minister added: "I would be even happier when they are actually back in the country, both those in Iraq and those still in Kuwait."

"It is something we have always pressed for, and this would implement just one of the steps of the UN Security Council resolutions. Saddam Hussein still has to withdraw totally and unconditionally from Kuwait and the legitimate government must be restored."

In a statement to MPs, Mr Hurd said: "We are delighted for all the hostages and their families." Britain would be actively seeking early clarification of arrangements for their departure. "We will then do everything in our power to

help those concerned to get home as soon as practicable."

Aircraft are ready to collect the 1,100 British nationals in Kuwait and Iraq if they are allowed home. But Foreign Office sources advise Britons in hiding in Kuwait to remain under cover until it is clear they will be allowed to leave.

Gerald Kaufman, the shadow foreign secretary, also welcomed the move. "We share in the rejoicing of the families of the hostages."

It was Iraq's "first positive response" to the UN demands and raised the possibility of talks between the US and Iraq bearing fruit. "Since the inhumane purpose of holding these hostages was to use them as a human shield in the event of war, this decision may carry important implications for Iraqi policy," he said.

"It's clear evidence that sanctions are working and should be given a chance to work further to bring about, if possible, the withdrawal of Iraq from Kuwait by peaceful means."

Mr Hurd said he "could not possibly predict" how long it would take for all the hostages to be released. He hoped those in hiding would also be allowed to leave. The Government was trying to clarify the position with Iraq.

Sir David Steel, the foreign affairs spokesman of the Liberal Democrats, said although there was rejoicing for the hostages there should be no vote of thanks for President Saddam for undoing something he should not have done in the first place.

Elated families say prayers have been answered

By DAVID YOUNG

THE news of the plan to release all hostages was greeted with undiminished elation at the headquarters of the Gulf Support Group. Many of the staff manning the helpline at their offices in Kingsway, central London, are relatives of the hostages.

Officially, the group greeted the news with "cautious optimism". But one of the staff, Sue Dorrington, aged 43, from Chingford, London, whose husband David, also aged 43, is held in Baghdad, could not contain her emotion. She said: "I'm over the moon. It's what we've prayed and prayed for."

Mr Dorrington, a systems

analyst at a Kuwaiti bank, went into hiding after the Iraqis invaded, but was picked up two weeks ago and taken to Baghdad.

Mrs Dorrington spoke to her husband on the telephone for just 30 seconds yesterday. "He said 'Have you heard the news?' and I said 'Yes, all hell's breaking loose over here'. She added: "Everything is total confusion. I'm so excited, I can't get my breath. If it happens, it will be absolutely marvellous. It's what we all wanted and have been fighting for, not just one or two, but all of them."

Deborah Pepper, aged 25, from Stafford, said the news that her husband John, a 29-year-old British Airways employee, will be coming home is fantastic. She is among a group of 30 wives who were due to fly to Jordan on Sunday and then on to Baghdad to plead for their husbands' release. They are now considering whether they will make the trip to help celebrate.

The women, whose husbands were on the BA flight which landed in Kuwait on the day the Iraqis invaded, have been given visas for Iraq but have now been advised that they should not travel this weekend. Mrs Pepper said: "John was moved from Kuwait to Baghdad and since last week I have had daily contact with him. I even spoke to him at 6 am this morning and he obviously hadn't a clue about what was going to be announced."

Mrs Brenda Fort, whose husband, David, is an offshore drilling engineer who was a passenger on board, said: "If by going out there I can get my husband home quicker I will go, but we will have to wait to get advice from the Foreign Office before making up our minds."

"The news so far has been wonderful. I did not know how my husband was until Monday of this week when I was finally told that he was in a hotel in Baghdad and I was able to phone him there. He is in very good spirits and hopes to be home to Kent before Christmas."

The passengers had been kept in Kuwait for three weeks before being bussed to Baghdad late in August. They have been in a hotel but it was only on Monday that the Foreign Office was able to let relatives know of the exact whereabouts of the men.

Andy Charles, of the Gulf Support Group, said that there would be "severe logistical problems" in getting them home. He said: "It's going to take a long time to fly people out and it's going to take a long time to persuade people in hiding that it's safe to come out. We are talking to the Iraqi Embassy and also the Foreign Office, trying to get as much information as we can."

British Airways immediately said that aircraft were ready to fly to the Gulf to pick up freed hostages as soon as they

Hope for jailed Irishman

HOPES were rising after President Saddam's announcement for the early release of Brian Duffy, the 44-year-old Ulsterman sentenced in Baghdad on Wednesday to one year's imprisonment for attempting to leave Iraq without an exit visa.

The MP for South Down, Eddie McGrady, was in the Iraqi embassy to intercede on his constituent's behalf when the news that all hostages were free to leave came through.

"It was a very exciting time and there was great pleasure among everyone concerned that such a happy announcement could be made. I was able to pass on the news to hostages' relatives with visas who were preparing to fly out on Monday. It was very exciting and happy to see their faces light up."

Mr McGrady had hoped to see the ambassador, but said he had a fruitful and "hopefully very positive" meeting with the minister plenipotentiary about Mr Duffy's case. "It is ironic and sad that for the sake of 24 hours in jail and is not free to leave like the others."

Mr McGrady said the Iraqi minister had responded positively and helpfully to his request that he appeal to Baghdad for Mr Duffy's release on humanitarian grounds. "It gives me some confidence that in the not too distant future things will turn out all right," the Social Democratic and Labour Party MP said.

Mr Duffy, from Ardglass, County Down, travelled to Iraq earlier this year on an Irish passport to work with one of two Ulster firms building President Saddam's £15 million new palace in Baghdad.

He was arrested with four of his colleagues on Iraq's northern border with Syria three months ago as they attempted to escape, but only he has been

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Queue here for execution

Philip Howard

Class distinction is alive and well. It has merely changed its clothes. Not many people want to be a duke these days (or at any rate, not many admit to it, though I can think of one or two who would like it a lot, each of them quite unsuitable); the term "gentleman" is something musty, and difficult to use other than ironically, facetiously, or with some other spin given to it, in the way that the English do by intonation and eyebrow. The same applies to "lady". "I don't believe in class differences, but luckily my butler disagrees with me," as the old butler said in the *Marcel* cartoon. But that was some years ago. We are all middle-class now, or at any rate aspiring to the state. Those with private incomes tend to keep quiet about them, rather than splash them around.

But we have not all suddenly become modest and uncompetitive. What we all want to be these days is not a duke, or a countess, or a lord, or a lady, but an executive. We carry shiny black briefcases, and fob watches, and portable telephones, and top pockets full of serious pens, as outward and visible badges of our executivedom. Old lady to yuppie self-importantly telephoning his "personal assistant" about some piffing matter on the Bristol flyer: "If you must do that disgusting thing on the train, young man, please do it in the toilet." We have invented executive toys, which can mean anything from worry beads to clashing balls. The important thing is that they should look expensive and exclusive.

The latest edition of *Chambers* recognises the new weasel word, by defining "executive" as, "for the use of business executives, hence (loosely) expensive, sophisticated". Pompous tycoon in *New Yorker* cartoon: "This is my executive suite and this is my executive vice-president, Ralph Anderson, and my executive secretary, Adele Eades, and my executive desk and my executive carpet and my executive wastepaperbasket and my executive astirry and my executive pen set and my..."

Anyone who now travels by air at his own expense (and therefore, it goes without saying, in the cheaper seats) cannot fail to have noticed the capacious seats, free drinks, expensive food, "complimentary" newspapers, and so on, enjoyed by those travelling in executive and club classes at the expense of their companies and their shareholders. It is becoming increasingly difficult for non-executive citizens to get a seat at Wimbledon, Lord's, Twickenham, or even blessed St James's Park, because the space is occupied by executive suites for corporate hospitality, i.e. posh private bars dispensing G & Ts to fat executives who cannot take a foot-bath from a side-step, even when the wind is southerly. Self-important executive journalists

blackmail airlines to have their tickets "upgraded". In the Highlands the prime shooting rights are all taken for executive and corporate entertaining these days, so pushing the prices beyond the pockets of ordinary, non-executive biffers.

Executive is our new snob and weasel word. This is odd, since it is generally agreed in offices that an executive is somebody who talks to the visitors and goes out to lunch, while others do the work. It is such a colourless little word to have acquired such high and mighty connections. It comes from the modest Latin word *exequor*, *exequutus*, which merely means to do something, to carry something out. Cicero: "Hurry to execute your instructions." Earlier in this century, as businesses grew bigger, executive was introduced (in the United States at first) to replace businessman and man of affairs, as the name for somebody with a certain brief authority in an organisation.

All it really means is somebody who gets things done. And we all do that, to some extent, unless we are full-time couch potatoes. And even then we are executives when we press the button to change channels (if we can find the telly-zapper). Executive is just the latest example of the old English game of snobbery and euphemism, by which a plumber is called a bathroom designer consultant, and a rat catcher a pest extermination manager. Everybody who does anything from talking over a bank to bringing round new paperclips, is literally an executive. It is just that some people have more to execute than others.

The equivalent devalued word in newspapers is editor. There used to be just one editor, and his subordinates were called reporters, writers, and sub-editors. Now any rag worth its 35p has at least 30 editors, with responsibilities ranging from pop to knickers.

The process has inevitably devalued the word. When everyone is somebody, then no one's anybody. And all shall equal be: the Earl, the Marquis, and the Duke, the Groom, the Butler and the Cook, the Executive who banks with Coutts, the Executive who cleans the boots. It is a suitable word for such grandeur, being as adaptable as Plasticine. Execute, after all, is the word we have used for five centuries as a euphemism for the judicial capital punishment of somebody (and there's another euphemism). The Nazis used "executive measure". *Exequatur*, as a euphemism for a political murder. It is a classic weasel word, whose hard meaning can be denied long after the corpses are counted. I think that less evasive words, such as joiner, carpenter, writer, businessman, hack, secretary, accountant, are more honourable job descriptions — as well as more honest.

...and moreover

ALAN COREN

None of this would be a problem if the cat didn't have a cerebrum. Because it has a cerebrum, it is capable of reason, thought, and because it is capable of rational thought, it may well have a reason for doing what it does. I need to discover what it is.

Until yesterday morning, I knew neither that cats had a cerebrum, nor that they could mull things over with them. Cats' brains were a closed book to me, before I opened *The Concise Encyclopaedia of Cats*. I found it in Child's Hill Public Library, where the cat waited outside. When I came out again, the cat looked up at me, so I showed it the book, because, by dint of a cursory flip while the librarian did her stuff, I had by that time discovered that it had a cerebrum, and I wanted to keep it abreast of developments.

Then I walked home. The cat followed. It's about a mile. "Do you have a lot of cats?" the librarian had enquired, stamping.

"None," I replied. "But one's been following me for three days. I thought I'd try to find out why."

"It loves you," said the librarian. "They do that, with catpeople."

"I am not a catperson," I said. The librarian smiled at catperson's smile. "You may not think you are," she said.

The cat had picked me up on Monday morning. I was taking my usual short-cut home through Hampstead Cemetery, and I had paused at the mottled headstone of Vitruvius Wyatt (1824-1897) to wonder why anyone should be christened Vitruvius, when the cat came out from behind it. It was a predominantly black cat, but with a half-white face — as if Andrew Lloyd Webber, having wisely concluded that his musical bucket could not go twice to the well, had decided to tailor his ambitions to *The Cat of the Opera* — and a white tail.

I paid it no attention, and strolled on. It strolled after. When I stopped at the tomb of James Clarke, landlord of Jack Straw's Castle, to regret that nobody in 1913 had mustered the facetiousness to chisel *Time, Please!* above his remains, the cat stopped, too. And when I

hurried on (for graveyards have a way of suddenly reminding you not to hang about) the cat likewise put boot to throttle. I arrived home, and it stopped at the steps; I opened the front door, but it showed no inclination to enter. It was not after food or shelter. What was it after?

It sat there all day, but whether it vanished because of it, I did not notice. Certainly, it had gone by midnight, when I put out the empty milk bottles, but when I took in the full ones on Tuesday morning, it was back. It did not stir until noon, when I walked a mile to the shops. It sat outside three of them, then it walked back at my heels. I stopped at West Hampstead nick, and went in to ask if anyone had reported a lost cat, but they said they didn't do cats, it's had enough doing dogs, try sticking a note on the gate, so I came out again, and the cat got off the bonnet of a Panda and fell back in step. It spent the afternoon outside my front door again, was gone at midnight, and back on Wednesday morning. We walked to the library.

The encyclopaedia was not the only book we borrowed. We also took out Desmond Morris's *Catwatching* and, God help us, Beverly Nichols's *Cats A-Z*. Useless, the pair of them: Mr Morris has 60 chapters with titles like *Why do Cats Eat Grass?* and *Why does a Cat Wag its Tail?* but you will search in vain for *Why does a Cat Follow You up the Pub?* and Beverly Nichols says F stands for fur. Since he also says the best way to appreciate a cat's fur is to have a candle-lit dinner with it, I saw little point in investigating what he had entered under F. The odds against Beverly and his moogle ever having tied a few on at the Cricklewood Tavern seemed somewhat long.

It is Thursday morning as I write, the cat is back on the front step, and I do not know what to do next. I had planned to take a walk across Hampstead Heath, but as it is generally full of tattooed blokes with absaltons and Rottweilers at their heels, I should feel a bit of a...

A bit of a catperson.

President Saddam Hussein has shown an impressive grasp of the American mind. His announcement of an end to hostage-holding removes the most potent irritant that might have prodded his enemy into a popular war. Without some "profound irritation", as George Kennan pointed out 40 years ago, American citizens are by nature reluctant to take up arms. Since he wrote those words, their truth has been hidden by the threat of communism, a permanent spur to American preparedness to fight. But they have remained true.

The transformation in international affairs caused by communism's fall has become a cliché of every second-rate speechifier. But the depth of the hole which the events of 1989 have left in American arguments for war has still not been fully mapped. This week the Bush administration has come up hard against Kennan's rule: no single uneasy sensation seeping into the people's consciousness, no heart for a popular war.

Since August — and with quickening rhetoric in recent days — Mr Bush's top advisers have done their best with logic and argument

to persuade Americans and their representatives in Congress that the threat of imminent war against Iraq must be maintained. But the critical reason for a fight still eludes the presidential grasp.

James Baker, the Secretary of State, gave one of the most powerful performances of his life before the Senate foreign relations committee on Wednesday, arguing that Saddam was a singularly dangerous man, threatening a singularly important part of the world at a singularly important time in history. The main result, however, was an emboldened response by Democrat critics calling for sanctions to be given more time, for greater sensitivity to Iraq's diplomatic overtures and for greater consideration of the likely aftermath of war.

Washington political analysts are locked in a debate about whether American scepticism about war is caused by a failure of the president to articulate his policy, or a popular rejection of a policy which is understood all too well. Saddam's view of this argument is now clear. He senses that America understands its president, is not concerned about the

dismemberment of the people and policy of Kuwait, will not fight for "international order", and might be moved only by the sense that Saddam is stupidly inflexible over the fate of Americans.

By saying that he will release his hostages (even with all the ambiguity that his statement contains) Saddam is showing that he reacts favourably to "positive changes", such as the president's decision to exchange top-level envoys in the next few weeks. The message to the American people is that they need no longer worry about the hostages. The message to Congress is that if Iraq can be flexible on one of the American demands, maybe, with more time, it will be flexible on others: the future of Kuwait and its ruling family.

Saddam needs time. He faces an adversary whose military machine has a momentum that somehow he must stall. Democratic leaders in Congress say that they fear a warpath like that in 1914, when the rail-mobilisation of troops and artillery put peace and war in the hands of those who had fixed the railway timetables. But the Iraqi leader has reason to fear that

prospect more than does any liberal senator.

The momentum of diplomacy is also strong. But Saddam knows that talking will not by itself stop war, and indeed, as it did before the battle for the Falklands, may become more intense as the date for fighting grows closer. His best hope is to use diplomacy both to exploit American domestic weakness and to divide the international alliance against him.

Yesterday's news was significant in both respects. In addition to the promise of hostage releases, the exaggeration of American ideas for an international peace conference brought disturbance among the allies, raising the notion that Saddam may be given some indirect incentive to leave Kuwaiti territory. This immediately brought Israel from the wings of the drama, where the United States wants it to stay, to centre stage.

The bigger worry for the White House, however, is still the mismatch between the president's grand aspirations for American leadership in the new world order, and the reluctance of his critics to judge these aspirations worthy of

war. There is a growing partisanship surrounding the Gulf confrontation. During the Senate hearings on Capitol Hill, influential military figures, including two former chairmen of the joint chiefs of staff, have fed Democratic appetites to embarrass the president. Senator Sam Nunn of Georgia would have to be a saint, which he is not, to ignore the prospective benefits to his own presidential ambitions of appearing to bring America back from the brink of an unpopular war. As one White House aide put it: "This is one more chance that the Democrats see to make George Bush a one-term president."

If war comes, with thousands of American casualties, all would-be occupants of the White House want to be able to say "we warned you"; if a defeat of Saddam is followed by a resurgence of Iranian or Syrian aggression, ditto; and if the American triumph is total, the Democrats will still be able to say that their congressional leaders played their full part as laid down by the constitution. Saddam Hussein has become a first-class student of American political priorities.

Peter Stothard, US Editor, on the shrewd manipulation of a nation shrinking from war

Saddam hits the American nerve

Haughey the first casualty of a quiet revolution in Ireland

The inauguration last Monday of Mary Robinson as President of Ireland presents a remarkable combination of "firsts": first woman president, of course; first president not nominated by Fianna Fáil; first person elected to any office in the republic to be publicly welcomed by the Grand Master of the Orange Order (the Rev Martin Smith); first president whose inauguration reception was attended by a leading Northern Unionist (Ken Maginnis).

The last two distinctions came about because during her campaign Mrs Robinson indicated that she favours amendment of Articles 2 and 3 of the republic's constitution, which implicitly lay claim to the territory of Northern Ireland. The two other presidential candidates, interestingly, did not attack her over this statement, but remained non-committal. As a result both of Mrs Robinson's statement and of the reticence of her opponents, opposition parties in the Dáil have been emboldened to take up this subject, hitherto taboo as far as practical politics were concerned. This week, the Workers' party, on the far left of Irish electoral politics, tabled a resolution for a referendum on the amendment of these articles.

The new leader of Fine Gael, the traditional right wing of Irish politics, supported the resolution, as did the Labour party. Fianna Fáil is opposed and its coalition partners, the Progressive Democrats, do not favour any immediate decision, so the articles will not go to a referendum in this parliamentary session or probably in the lifetime of the present Dáil. That is probably just as well, for the form of amendment proposed by the Workers' party is unattractive. A BBC report described the amendment as removing the republic's "territorial claim" over Northern Ireland. Unfortunately, this is just what the proposed amendment does not do. It would retain the present Article 2, which defines "the national territory" as "the whole island of Ireland, its land and the territorial seas". In effect, it would suspend the *de facto* implementation of that *de jure* insistence until such time as a majority of the people of Northern



Conor Cruise O'Brien on the tide of change licking round Ireland's territorial imperatives, and its leader

Ireland agrees to the proposition. The amendment confates Article 2 of the constitution with Article 1a of the Anglo-Irish Agreement. As this would make explicit the implicit tightening of the north-south relationship that Unionists condemned in Article 1a, amendment of the constitution along the lines proposed this week would be unlikely to win over Unionist hearts and minds. Still, some ground has been gained, and a taboo has been broken. A satisfactory amendment may yet emerge out of the committee deliberations sensibly proposed by the Progressive Democrats.

In the meantime, the dramatic course of the presidential election has been having repercussions throughout Irish politics. Fine Gael, displeased by the poor

showing of its candidate, Austin Currie, has dismissed its leader, Alan Dukes. From the moment of his election, the new leader, John Bruton — hitherto vaguely regarded as right wing — has taken a liberal stance, not only favouring a referendum on Articles 2 and 3 but also urging a referendum on the much hotter issue of the constitutional prohibition of any legislation permitting divorce.

It is only a few years since Fine Gael was defeated in a referendum on this issue — by two thirds of those voting, in a low poll — so this is a bold initiative. It was undoubtedly stimulated by the results of the presidential campaign, in which Mrs Robinson's opponents made a pitch in the direction of the anti-divorce lobby, and came surprisingly unscathed.

The most important repercussions of the presidential campaign are being felt in the camp of the biggest loser: Fianna Fáil. This week the standard of revolt against the leadership of Charles J. Haughey was raised by Brian Lenihan, Fianna Fáil's presidential candidate, who was dismissed from the coalition government during the campaign by Mr Haughey (under pressure from his coalition partners the Progressive Democrats) after Mr Lenihan was caught out in what the public perceived as a lie.

This week Mr Lenihan's constituency party, in Dublin West, called on Mr Haughey to reinstate Mr Lenihan in the government (in which he served as deputy premier). Mr Haughey is most unlikely to do this, for it would mean

the downfall of his government. Dublin West says that if Mr Lenihan is not reinstated it will nominate him for the presidency of the Fianna Fáil party, a post now held by Mr Haughey.

What Dublin West decides might not matter much if Mr Lenihan had personally distanced himself from its proceedings, but he has not. On the contrary, a spokesman for him has said: "Mr Lenihan will not rule out the possibility that he might allow his name to go forward." This, as Mr Haughey must clearly see, is Lenihan-speak for: "I'm running, and that man had better watch out."

Seven years ago, when a majority in Fianna Fáil wanted to get rid of Mr Haughey, they were deterred by pressure from the party's grassroots. This time, the revolt against Mr Haughey is beginning at the grassroots. If Mr Lenihan's support, which is precarious, holds up, Mr Haughey cannot survive politically into the spring.

Mr Lenihan is hugely popular, and Mr Haughey lost caste, in terms of Fianna Fáil tribal values, by dismissing him at the behest of coalition partners, renegades from Fianna Fáil. The party conference is scheduled for spring. If Mr Lenihan is still in good health, he should defeat Mr Haughey for the presidency of Fianna Fáil. Rather than face such a catastrophic conference, the parliamentary party may pre-empt the dreadful day by providing itself with a new party leader.

Nothing can now save Mr Haughey politically, provided Mr Lenihan's health holds into the spring. And even if the immediate threat from Mr Lenihan can somehow be staved off, Mr Haughey's departure cannot be long delayed. He is now a burden to Fianna Fáil, as well as to the rest of the country. Mary Robinson's victory has been, for him, the beginning of the end. And events next door have not helped him. The fall of Mrs Thatcher, who came to power in the same year as Mr Haughey, has set some important Fianna Fáil people thinking about matters previously unthinkable.

After the fall...

Ian Grist, the MP sacked earlier this week from his job as a Welsh minister, is about to wreak an obscure revenge on the Tory party. He is suing for compensation — not for loss of earnings or unfair dismissal, but for the pain he has suffered since tumbling down some steps at the Conservative club in his Cardiff constituency.

Grist, who supported Michael Heseltine during the Tory leadership contest and appears to have paid the price, has been limping around the Commons since July with a walking stick. He broke his

leg, lacerated his arm and damaged some ribs in the fall, which happened during a lull in his constituency surgery. "I decided to go and have a look in the cellar," he says. "The next thing I knew I had gone headlong down the steps."

Freed from the constraints of office and still nursing a sore leg, Grist feels he deserves financial

compensation. The club secretary has said that he would expect some compensation if he were the one who had fallen.

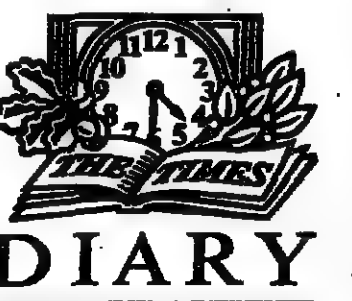
If the matter goes all the way to the courts, local party officials would almost certainly become involved, which could lead to some interesting confrontations in court, for the constituency party secretary is Grist's wife, Wendy. This could give new meaning to the often expressed desire of departing ministers to spend more time with their families.

Gulf rumbles

A book by the former press secretary to President Kennedy is about to add to President Bush's troubles over the Gulf by claiming that the confrontation could have been avoided had it not been for Washington's bungling.

In *Le Guerre du Golfe: Le Dossier Secret*, the first serious book on the invasion of Kuwait, Pierre Salinger and French author Eric Laurent outline how Washington initially misread what was happening in Iraq. Salinger, now the London-based chief foreign correspondent of ABC News, says: "I have no doubt that when they have read our evidence, people will conclude that the crisis could have been avoided."

The book, to be published in Paris on Monday, will also embarrass officials in Britain, where as yet there are no plans for publication. With Alan Clark, who is now a defence minister, still under the shadow of accusations that he helped British firms to undermine the arms embargo on Iraq, Salinger's book lists 207 companies



he says have assisted Iraq's military build-up.

"These companies helped supply chemical warfare weapons and equipment for the development of a nuclear capability," he says. "The Germans head the list, followed by the French and Americans. But there are about ten British companies as well." Salinger declines to name them before publication, but he predicts a heated international debate.

Rushdie bonus

Salman Rushdie's brief breaking of cover to sign books at Waterstone's in Hampstead on Wednesday has provided the lucky purchasers with a bonus far in excess even of that available to investors in electricity shares. About 100 people queued to pay £12.99 for signed copies of *Haram* and *The Sea of Stories*. According to Roy Davids, head of Sotheby's book department, Rushdie's signature immediately resulted in a 1,000 per cent mark-up in the value of the books. Those who asked Rushdie to date the book will enjoy an additional bonus.

A signed and dated copy could

fetch £150," says Davids. Rushdie's plight is unique and that is reflected in the price of signed copies. Signed copies of *The Satanic Verses* change hands for up to £300, says Davids. "The longer he is in hiding the more valuable his work becomes."

● The military-industrial complex that President Eisenhower complained about 30 years ago is alive and well and meeting in Palm Springs, California, next week. A three-day conference, addressed by generals, economists and captains of industry, will examine "new opportunities" for companies facing slow business because of the end of the cold war. The billing shows presence. "Desert warfare", it reads, "...can you afford to miss it?"

Ecu maniacal

A mail order company this week became the first British firm to offer its customers the option of paying in ecus. National Westminster already allows customers to open bank accounts in ecus. Advocates are busy outlining plans for an interchangeable sterling/ecu coinage, as, for instance, Sir Leon Brittan did on this page last Thursday. The ecu thus seems a coin whose time has come. But has anyone really thought through the difficulties?

At current exchange rates, coin experts point out, a £5 note would be fixed at, say, 7 ecus. If someone then spends £2.95, they expect in change £2.05 — or 2.97 ecus. This would mean that ecu coins would need to divide down to at least one hundredth, with the 0.01 ecu coin having the memorable figure of

0.714 pence stamped on its reverse. The 20p coin would be worth 0.28 ecus and the 5p coin 0.07 ecus.

Fortunately the Royal Mint at present has no intention of having any truck with such a farce. "The French, Belgians and Irish already have a commemorative ecu, but the British are lagging behind on this one. There are no plans whatsoever," it says.

Hommes terribles

After extensive deliberation, France's first Grand Prix de la Misogynie has been awarded to the sports magazine *L'Equipe* for persistently ignoring and downgrading the sporting achievements of women. The award commemorates the late (and much married) prince of misogyny, the actor Sacha Guitry, whose favourite saying was: "If women were good, God would have been one."

Among the runners-up for the award was the French minister of the interior, Pierre Joxe, honoured for his instructions that France's policewomen should wear high heels while on duty. Coincidentally, France has just honoured a female guardian of the law, Martine Monteil, head of the Paris vice-squad, as its woman of the year. Whether the teeters on stilettos is not recorded.

Britain, alas, has no misogyny award, although if one existed, Peter Sissons's remarks about women on television and John Major's exclusion of women from his cabinet might make them strong runners. The Diary accordingly offers a prize for the best nomination for British Misogynist of 1990.



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NO THANKS TO SADDAM

Neither the western hostages in Iraq nor their relieved families owe President Saddam Hussein any gratitude for deciding to release more than 2,700 of his "guests". He should never have held them in the first place. A few have died in captivity, many have been physically maltreated, all have suffered psychological anguish, shared by their families and friends. The price originally set on their heads was, quite simply, the world's acquiescence in Iraq's seizure of Kuwait.

For 111 days, Saddam has illegally ignored a binding UN resolution, 663, which ordered their immediate release. Saddam's offer of "apologies for harm and forgiveness from God Almighty" is no compensation. If he now yields them up, that is a tribute to the firmness of most governments in the face of a return to medieval standards of international relations. Saddam's promises are worth nothing. Even this good news should be treated with circumspection until the last hostage has left Iraq. If they all go free, Saddam will have made his first retreat since August 2. But he has still given no indication that he is prepared to bow to the rest of the United Nations' demands, and withdraw totally and unconditionally from Kuwait. Yesterday's volte-face may be based on the cynical calculation that the hostages' detention has inspired such universal disgust that their release is now more likely to soften Western opinion for a compromise which would allow him to keep all or part of Kuwait. His letter to Iraq's rubber-stamp national assembly says only that the hostages have served their purpose, buying Iraq time to complete its mobilisation.

This decision is not without risks for Baghdad. Western leaders have rightly insisted throughout that the existence of hostages could not be allowed to determine military decisions, but there is no doubting the weight their release will lift from commanders' shoulders. Saddam has surrendered a diplomatic and a military card. A man who has performed one U-turn can perform more. However slender the chance that he has begun to understand the certainty of military defeat, the right response must be, as President Bush said yesterday, to intensify the military and diplomatic pressure on him to throw in his hand in Kuwait.

There is no case for yet more visits to Baghdad. The trickle through Saddam's palace of out-of-work dignitaries has served only to

convince Iraq's dictator that he was not isolated from world opinion, and as such has increased the risk of war. The texts of the UN resolutions are clear and require no elaboration by emissaries. The voice which matters is now that of the American administration. Only President Bush and his secretary of state, James Baker, are capable of driving home to Saddam the imminence of the "sudden, massive strike" Mr Baker has said will be the alternative to peaceful surrender of Kuwait.

Democracies do not go easily to war. Since August 2 the Bush administration, with only occasional tremors, has kept a remarkably steady track, combining vast military mobilisation with sedulous cultivation of diplomatic support, culminating in last week's UN resolution authorising the use of force. A third of the world's nations have given financial or military support to the coalition ranged against Iraq. That coalition is now militarily credible. The strategy may be within sight of paying off. But Mr Bush has difficulties on the home front and hence the decision to hold direct talks with Iraq.

Those talks may not lead anywhere but to war. Their purpose is to reassure American and allied opinion that the US has done everything in its power to make sanctions effective and to convince Saddam of the intensity of the American commitment to its police action. This is diplomacy at its most desperate. At a moment such as this, others should abstain from touting so-called "compromise solutions". Mr Bush insists that "there are no secret deals, direct or indirect". Mr Baker that the only carrot in his briefcase is that "if he gets out he doesn't get the stick".

Even Iraq's unconditional withdrawal and the restoration of Kuwait's legal government would do no more than meet the UN's terms. It would leave the Middle East a dangerous place. Mr Bush's commitment, repeated yesterday, to restore peace and stability to the Gulf is part and parcel of action under Chapter VII of the UN Charter, under which all the security council's decisions have been taken. Once Kuwait is freed, peacefully or by force, that task will have to be addressed. Post-withdrawal diplomacy will be even more fraught than this month's endgame. But rolling back aggression is the priority, while the Americans, whose troops would take most casualties in a war, have earned the right to be trusted to pursue.

POLICING THE POLICE

The number of external investigations into alleged misdeeds by West Midlands police officers now far exceeds that in any other force. Some of those investigations are into past police conduct in cases of national interest, such as the Birmingham Six and the shooting of Gail Kinchin.

The Home Secretary, Kenneth Baker, has wide powers to order an investigation of the way the force is managed, including a public inquiry, and he should use them. Confidence in the second largest force in England and Wales will not return without some greater catharsis than that achieved by the disbanding of the serious crimes squad last year.

The spate of serious complaints against members of the West Midlands force suggests a standing condition of institutional malaise and a failure of good management, caused either by the personal inadequacy of senior officers or because structures of control are too cumbersome, or both. Those faults are not confined to this one force, nor are West Midlands policemen peculiarly incompetent. In a different way similar questions of force efficiency — and of who, if anyone, is really in charge — are raised by the damning inspectorate report on the Derbyshire constabulary.

The West Midlands case illustrates the need for a more general review of the way the British are policed. It is of the nature of the present individual investigations, in West Midlands as elsewhere, that they are unlikely to produce much more than the results presently visible — a procession of suspensions and reinstatements, and a sequence of courtroom quarrels in individual criminal cases. This falls a long way short of giving the wider community the reassurance it is entitled to.

Accountability is at the root of good policing. It was in the interests of accountability that the last Royal Commission on the police, set up in 1960, came down narrowly against recommending a national force. In

some cases — a distinct county force like Kent, for instance, coterminous with the county council — the accountability argument of that commission still looks persuasive. But in the large conurbation forces — Greater Manchester, West Yorkshire, West Midlands itself — accountability is far more tenuous. Too many cities, towns and districts are covered by a large force remote from each of them. West Midlands covers Birmingham, Coventry, Wall, Dudley, Sandwell and Wolverhampton.

At least the police in West Midlands, as part of a national force, would have been accountable to parliament as the London police are now. The 1964 Police Act, like the royal commission's recommendations, was anxious to protect the autonomy of chief constables which had been a feature of the older, more numerous and smaller borough and county forces. But it was a model of autonomy which presumed a chief constable's close relationship with one local community.

There is a growing list of issues concerning the policing of England and Wales, many of them as unresolved as when they formed the brief for the 1960 commission: the function of local police authorities, the accountability of chief constables, police-public relations including the handling of complaints, and the need to attract the right quality of recruit to the force.

The 1964 act was a good enough answer for its time, but society has since changed almost beyond recognition. It is unlikely that a Home Secretary who asks the right questions about the West Midlands or Derbyshire forces would find himself stopping short of addressing the fundamentals, or of preferring the solutions which seemed best 30 years ago. Royal commissions were out of fashion under Margaret Thatcher, but few issues lend themselves more aptly to such an expert and nonpartisan study than the nature and purpose of the police. The time for a new royal commission on the police is fast approaching.

UNDER THE LASH

Tory backbenchers were so long chastised by Mrs Thatcher's scorpions that they appear immune to the gentler lash of Mr Major's whip. The Tories yesterday conducted a post-mortem on Wednesday's collapsed vote on the poll tax, when its majority fell to 57. They may have feared, with Hobbes, that when "men live without a common power to keep them in awe, they are in that condition which is called war." Those banished spectres, division and defeat, seem to have returned to the corridors of Westminster. Are the whips now powerless without Mrs Thatcher's sting?

The Conservative party is still in febrile mood after an exciting month. But what happened on Wednesday night was not quite the reverse it at first appeared. The Labour party whips managed for once to organise their vote, and the party's PR machine enabled them to trumpet their success. The Tory rebellion, such as it was, comprised John Lee, a handful of abstentions, a handful of unwise dinner invitations and over-tempting foreign trips. The Tory whips were careless, but are not yet impotent.

Richard Ryder, the new chief whip, is seen by his colleagues as suspiciously young and his nice for so Machiavellian a role. He and his team will be trying to reassert authority in the days ahead. They should not try too hard. Many of Mrs Thatcher's blunders can be traced to her often arrogant assumption that her

whips could always get parliament to do her bidding. There was no backbench faith in the poll tax, nor in the abolition of the Greater London Council, nor in rate capping, nor in the refusal of dog registration. Every backbencher knew long before the prime minister that the football identity cards scheme would not work, but she made them vote for it repeatedly before abandoning it herself.

On the great issues of the day, the government must get its majority or make way for another that can. Mr Major is in no greater danger on this score than was his predecessor. But on the lesser issues, there is no need for a government to insist on putting its wisdom above that of its backbenchers, least of all when it must back up such discipline with the crude mechanisms of patronage and punishment that characterised Mrs Thatcher's whipping practices. For MPs to assert their independence from time to time is not anarchy but good, pluralist government.

Now that Mr Major has indicated that he is prepared to countenance substantial reform of House of Commons procedure, including its ridiculous and male-chauvinist working hours, a fresh wind is blowing through the Palace of Westminster. A few narrow squeaks for the whips, even an occasional defeat on a vote that is not a matter of confidence, would be a healthy tendency. On Wednesday night, Tory absentees struck a small blow for parliamentary democracy.

Was there a 1989 press conspiracy to 'get Thatcher'?

From Mr Nigel Lawson, MP for Babby (Conservative)

Sir, I was slightly surprised to see the space given over in yesterday's *Times* to the extraordinary article by Sir Alan Walters ("Get Thatcher, and they did").

So far as I know, there was no conspiracy of any kind to get rid of Margaret Thatcher, nor does Sir Alan produce a shred of evidence to support this theory. His self-important assertion that "for the get-rid-of-Thatcher gang, I was a splendid intermediate target" is if anything the reverse of the case. It was the activities of Sir Alan Walters which, by damaging the government, damaged Margaret Thatcher.

These activities were well known on both sides of the Atlantic. To cite just one piece of evidence, Mr Peter Riddell, the highly-respected Washington correspondent of the *Financial Times*, reported on October 28, 1989, that "Sir Alan Walters... has recently told US bankers and policy-makers that sterling needs to fall to avoid a severe recession in the UK... His comments concerned some of his American listeners, according to participants, who felt that they contradicted the message from Mr Lawson about trying to secure a stable pound." (I have, incidentally, corroborated this in a letter from an eminent British economist who happened to be present.)

Sir Alan sees evidence of a conspiracy in the fact that at the height of the leadership crisis, the *Financial Times*, in articles by the political editor, Philip Stephens (November 14, 1990), and *The Economist* (November 24) told how on the evening of the Madrid conference in June 1989, after a tremendous row, Sir Geoffrey Howe and Nigel Lawson persuaded her (Mrs Thatcher) to accept the so-called Madrid conditions for ending the exchange-rate mechanism. Mr Stephens said both Mr Lawson

and Sir Geoffrey threatened to resign unless she accepted them.

However, it was hardly surprising that these articles appeared, given that the journalists concerned were reporting what Sir Geoffrey had said in his resignation statement to the House of Commons on November 13.

Sir Alan goes on to claim that in any event he had invented the Madrid conditions, in a memorandum sent to the prime minister "at least three days before the meeting" (the Madrid European Council was held on June 26 and 27 last year).

Without disclosing any secret memorandum, I might point out that I had already spelled out what were to be the key elements of the Madrid conditions in my (published) evidence to the Treasury select committee on June 12, some two weeks before the Madrid summit (report, June 13, 1989). Sir Alan's only contribution was to add some further irrelevant conditions which he well knew were unlikely to be met for many years, if ever, and which were rightly disregarded when we did at last join the ERM in October of this year.

Margaret Thatcher was a great prime minister. Sir Alan speaks more truly than he imagines when he writes "perhaps the first step on the slippery slope of Mrs Thatcher's decline was associated with my return to Number Ten in May 1989" — a step I urged her, in vain, not to take, warning her that it was bound to cause the government trouble we could well do without. And so, alas, it did.

Yours faithfully,
NIGEL LAWSON,
House of Commons,
December 6.

From Mr Philip Stephens
Sir, I was intrigued by Sir Alan Walters' article on the events leading up to Mrs Thatcher's

resignation. I think he demonstrates admirably the absurdity of the notion of a journalistic conspiracy to misrepresent the debate within her government about sterling's membership of the exchange-rate mechanism. For the record, I would like to correct a factual error in his account.

Sir Alan quotes my article of November 14, 1990 on the circumstances surrounding Mrs Thatcher's acceptance of the so-called Madrid conditions for ERM entry. He attempts to cast doubt on my chronology by stating that he had drafted the memorandum setting out these conditions three days before the meeting on June 25, 1989.

I have no reason to question Sir Alan's role in the drafting. But he has read five paragraphs further in the article he quotes he would have seen the following: On that fateful Sunday morning the two ministers were prepared to compromise. Their first demand had been that Mrs Thatcher agree that sterling should be in the ERM by the end of the year. Now they would accept a formula linking the date of membership to Britain's relative inflation rate and the completion of the single market.

In other words, I stated clearly in the article that the Madrid conditions were a compromise which followed Mrs Thatcher's rejection of their first demand. My report was entirely consistent with Sir Alan's role in drafting the conditions.

If Sir Alan cares to check the official Whitehall records — I assume he still has access to the relevant papers — he will find that my account of the June 25 meeting is correct.

Yours faithfully,
PHILIP STEPHENS
(Political editor,
Financial Times),
House of Commons,
December 6.

Poll tax changes

From the Secretary-General of the Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors

Sir, Recent comment in *The Times* (leading articles, November 28, December 4; letters, December 4) has focused on possible alternatives to the community charge.

In our responses over the last decade to the government's principal green papers on alternatives to the rating system, the Institution has repeatedly tested all reasonable options available against five key criteria: predictability of yield and buoyancy of income; ease and cheapness of collection and preventing avoidance of payment; the capacity to provide local identity and accountability; equitableness; and ease of understanding by those who have to pay.

In every case our conclusion has been that a domestic rating system based on capital values would be the least unsatisfactory solution judged against these criteria.

Film awards

From Mr Richard Price

Sir, In your detailed report (December 3) of the European Film Awards from Glasgow your correspondent referred to several organisations including Bafra which had helped bring this year's competition to Scotland.

There was one omission: Shell, who provided a hefty financial contribution. This was on top of their annual donation of £1 million which they have given to Bafra over the past three years. We have, as a result, been able to help many British and European educational and similar projects. It is a highly enlightened and successful relationship.

Yours etc,
RICHARD PRICE
(Honorary Treasurer),
British Academy of Film and Television Arts,
195 Piccadilly, W1.

Unkind cut

From Mr Robert Byard-Smith

Sir, Robert Cummings (obituary, December 5) did not amputate Ronald Reagan's legs in *King's Row*. Others may have tried, but Charles Coburn did it in the film.

Yours faithfully,
ROBERT BYARD-SMITH,
The Croft, Gomshall, Surrey.

Good for Ireland

From Mr Edward McWilliam, RA

Sir, May 1, as an expatriate, is permitted to salute the swearing in (report, December 4) of Mary Robinson as president of Ireland by stating that this is the best thing to happen in Ireland since the invention of Guinness.

Yours faithfully,
F. E. McWILLIAM,
6a Holland Villas Road, W14.

Chile forest threat

From Sir Peter Hutchison

Sir, In Chile recently, I was alarmed to learn that discussions are taking place between that country and Japan about further Japanese "investment" in the forestry sector in Chile, including possible acquisition of land. This follows an earlier contract which the previous government signed to provide woodchips for the Japanese paper industry for a duration of 30 years.

Evidence of that earlier contract was plain to see: large areas of native forest that had recently been cut and Japanese ships in Puerto Montt loading up to 40,000 tons of chips at a time from piles on the quayside.

The case for a local property tax is recognised in virtually every other country in western Europe. No form of local taxation is ideal but there is generally a broad correlation between the value of a person's home and the level of his or her income. Where this does not apply, a graduated scale of rebates can introduce a greater degree of fairness, as can other adjustments to the rating system that we have suggested.

We have recently carried out a further review of what might best form the "domestic" element of local authorities' revenue. Once again, we have been led inescapably towards the conclusion that a property tax based on capital values is the only practicable way forward.

Yours faithfully,
MICHAEL PATTISON,
Secretary-General,
The Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors,
12 Great George Street,
Parliament Square, SW1,
December 4.

Notwithstanding

From Mr Michael Ashenden

Sir, The suggestion in your leading article on "gobbledygook" (November 30), that lawyers draft it to provide work for other lawyers, implies a mutual esteem among lawyers which is near the opposite of the truth.

There are some technical words which are a form of shorthand. The word "lien" is one; it does not seem to me very difficult for a literate person to understand, and would need a lot of other words to replace it.

A working lifetime as a lawyer in commerce taught me, however, that generally lay clients have a greater liking for gobbledygook

than lawyers have. Incomprehensible jargon is more comforting than plain language, which nakedly exposes the client's true commercial position. Of course, hallowed precedent is far easier to defend, for both lawyer and lay client, than plain language, if the commercial deal goes wrong.

What is required to stimulate plain language is a commercial climate in which the potential rewards of success are judged to be greater than the risks involved if the deal goes wrong. That climate might well be called "Thatcherism".

Yours faithfully,
MICHAEL ASHENDEN,
25 Melrose Road,
Merton Park, SW19,
December 2.

From the Secretary of the Association of Metropolitan Authorities

Sir, In your leader you commend the proposal in a letter by Ralf Dahrendorf (both December 4) to allow local authorities the freedom to determine a mix of community charges, property taxes and other sources. If such freedom is desirable in the field of local taxation, how much more so that local authorities should have the freedom to determine the most effective internal structure for the administration of their different areas.

The imposition of the elected mayor in every council in the country would be an artificial constraint. If local authorities are to continue to be responsible organs then they must have more freedom, not less.

Yours faithfully,
RODNEY BROOKE, Secretary,
Association of Metropolitan Authorities,
35 Great Smith Street, SW1,
December 4.

Consumer credit

From Mr D. G. Anthony

Sir, Economists need not be perplexed by the October increase in consumer credit (report, December 4): a glance in the window of any high street retailer will make the reason clear.

The cause is not inflationary demand pressure — far from it — but a dramatic increase in the number of shops offering interest-free credit in an effort to boost flagging sales. This has led to a shift from cash to credit purchases by customers who are not normally users of credit.

Expect more of the same in the run-up to Christmas, and an end to it in January when the sales begin.

Yours faithfully,
D. G. ANTHONY,
Director and General Manager,
Hitachi Credit (UK) plc,
Hitachi House,
Stables Courtyard,
Church Road, Hayes, Middlesex,
December 5.

national parks. It will probably realise that renewable use of indigenous forest is, in these days, an economic alternative.

Surely the wealthier countries which, like Britain, have largely destroyed their native woodlands have a responsibility to those who still have that precious asset. It would be regrettable if the Japanese, who have recently shown reluctance to destroy their own forests, were to transfer their resulting problems to other, less wealthy nations.

Yours faithfully,
PETER HUTCHISON
(Chairman of the Trustees),
Royal Botanic Garden,
Edinburgh 3,
November 29.

Letters to the editor should carry a daytime telephone number. They may be sent to a fax number — (071) 782 5046.

Growing concern on car emissions

From the Chairman of the Royal Automobile Club

Sir, The RAC recently commissioned a study of different vehicle emission levels in the UK carried out by Professor Donald Stedman of Denver University. The results, which will be published on Friday December 7, are startling.

The study reveals that over 50 per cent of vehicle pollution comes from just 17 per cent of vehicles. Indeed 1 per cent of vehicles causes as much pollution as does the best 40 per cent. Poor emission levels are not necessarily related to vehicle age or category. The key factor is maintenance.

Many newer vehicles (less than three years old) also have poor emission levels, so reliance on new MOT provisions will not solve the problem, although it will undoubtedly help. It is clear that a huge amount of progress, in environmental terms, could be achieved by better vehicle maintenance.

Growing concern about pollution caused by cars means that we all have a responsibility to try to minimise the damage. At the RAC we also consider we have a responsibility to ensure that environmental measures are targeted at the real causes of the problem, and that the personal mobility which we all value so highly is not unnecessarily constrained.

The urgent need, now, is to find ways of ensuring that the minority of vehicles which are the main polluters are properly maintained and tuned. Indications are that if all vehicles were regularly maintained, harmful vehicle emissions would be halved.

I have today called on the new secretary of state for transport to initiate work, jointly with the motor industry and motoring organisations, to find ways of tackling the problem in the light of these important new findings.

Yours faithfully,
JEFFREY ROSE, Chairman,
The Royal Automobile Club,
Pall Mall, SW1,
December 6.

Standard transport

From Mrs Alex Scott

Sir, I trust that the European Commission will now ensure that either Venice abolishes gondolas, or else Amsterdam abandons its barge-shaped launches, in the interests of standardising waterborne urban transport (Mr Dauris, December 3). It is after all important that EC boat-builders compete on a level playing field.

Yours faithfully,
ALEX SCOTT,
Mail Cottage, Lamb Corner,
Dedham, Colchester, Essex,
December 4.

Old farm buildings

From Admiral Sir Nigel Henderson

Sir, Your report (November 30) that the Prince of Wales deplored the destruction of farm buildings and features of the rural landscape, because they are deemed no longer to have economic purpose, is no cause for serious disquiet.

However in this area and certainly in many other areas there are a large number of old farm buildings, many of them "listed", serving no economic purpose with modern farming methods.

Proprietors are not allowed to knock them down and no authority is prepared to pay to keep them up. In most cases they are not suitable for conversion to dwellings. Is one meant just to let them gently collapse, or is there an alternative?

Yours faithfully,
NIGEL HENDERSON,
Hensol, Mossdale,
Castle Douglas,
Dumfries and Galloway,
November 30.

Sent to try us

From Mr M. A. Girling

Sir, Nothing can possibly be more frustrating than trying to untangle three flies twisted inextricably round a very thin piece of nylon whilst standing waist-deep in a river at midnight and holding a torch in one's mouth.

Yours faithfully,
M. A. GIRLING,
Oakthorpe, Charlton Drive,
Charlton Kings,
Cheltenham, Gloucestershire.

From Miss Mary Brown

Sir, In the midst of cold, frozen December days, looking at my Australian calendar depicting, for the same month, hot, golden sands, turquoise-coloured sea and people in swim suits.

Yours,
MARY BROWN,
Mill House, Taynait, Argyll.

From Mrs Bridget Maxwell
Sir, Trying to get a pill down a cat's throat.

I remain, Sir, at my wits' end.
BRIDGET MAXWELL,
Brook Lodge,
Hambledon, Hampshire.

From Mr H. P. Mowatt

Sir, I live in the country, where I have one neighbour only who lives nearly opposite across the road.

Some bonehead drew the electoral boundary line between our two houses so that to reach our designated polling stations I have to travel 20 miles there and back and 12 miles in the opposite direction.

Yours faithfully,
H. P. MOWATT,
Ty Llog, Rosebush,
Clynderwen, Dyfed.

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SH RAILWAYS

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overpass -

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Hawthorn railway as an accommodation
to carry the railway over the
section of the Alameda Trunk Road,
near the railway upon completion
of Work No. 4;

10 metres in length), being a lengthening of the Railways (No. 1) Bill presented in the 1930-32 Session. Including creation of the new Works No. 1, substituted for Works 6 stopping up at Willeborough common, of Aylesford Place and the footpath and substituting for the latter a new one at the Ashford and Folkestone Railway

parishes of Sturton-le-Steeple and
Sturton, Nottinghamshire -
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Offices, Wellington Road,	
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Chief Executive, Liverpool City	
Council, Merseyside Buildings,	0
Esplanade, Liverpool:	0
Chief Executive, St. Helens	
Metropolitan Borough Council,	11
Town Hall, Victoria Square, St.	
Helens:	

Chief Executive, Bradford City Council, City Hall, Bradford: P
 Chief Officer and Director of Administration, Leeds City Council, Civic Hall, Leeds: P
 Chief Executive, Kent County Council, County Hall, Maidstone: —
 Borough Secretary and

Solicitor, Ashford Borough
 Council, Civic Centre, Tanners
 Lane, Ashford
 Chief Executive, Rochester upon
 Medway City Council, Civic
 Centre, Strood
 Clerk of the County Council and
 Chief Executive,
 Kent and Medway County
 Council, County Hall,
 9, Broad Street, Maidstone

Clark to the **Stanton-le-Skeppe**
Parish Council, Woodlawn
House, Gainsborough Road,
Stanton-le-Skeppe, Lincoln

Clerk to the North Levenson Water
 Board, Levenson, Levenson, Levenson
 1414 Cottage, Main Street, North
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Brown rice with a serving of cant

Libby Purves examines with trepidation the propaganda which could turn her children into teenage mutant hero vegetarians

In the Thirties, George Orwell said: "Every intelligent boy of 16 is a socialist." The principle of teenage idealism and a healthy urge to change the world still holds good, except that today, every intelligent 16-year-old is an environmentalist.

The young greens are, naturally, bombarded with literature from pressure groups anxious to catch 'em young. Most eight-year-olds can now deliver a withering attack on their mother's furniture polish, and some turn out lights on the landing to save the Earth's resources. At this age, though, they find little difficulty in putting their own species first. Country children (or city farm-acquainted ones) would not want to see a pig suffer in an intensive crate, but find no difficulty in admiring a litter of piglets while contemplating toast-in-the-hole for tea.

As they grow older, things become more complicated. The trials of puberty bring on a fierce sentimentality and intense, desperately empathetic squeamishness. Animals are a useful focus for all kinds of emotions: a 14-year-old may weep for hours over a fox cub but be unwilling to take any interest in the fate of poorer humans, let alone to divert any of her own money away from Madonna records. Such teenagers are a useful source of infantry on local demonstrations against hunts, circuses and battery farms: demos provide a handy peg for rebellion. And this is the point when anxious mothers stand aghast as their children make the ominous announcement: "I'm a vegetarian."

Why ominous? Vegetarianism is a perfectly reasonable adult choice. The trouble is that nutritionally it holds so many perils for growing children that omnivore mothers despair. To be a well-nourished vegetarian requires nutritional knowledge, self-discipline, and regularity of habits. Meat, after all, is a wonderful short-cut to certain necessary proteins and amino-acids, and the distraught spike-haired figure eating a messy chicken sandwich at 2am in the kitchen is, a parent can comfort herself, at least stocking up on what it takes to make him grow. Of course, so is the responsible domestic type cooking up kidney-bean goulash and chewing through muesli with fortified soya-milk, but this is not the

teenage norm. As one mother of two newly converted children put it in despair: "They were so picky anyway that we are now on a diet of mainly raisins and brown bread. Frankly, I am beginning to suspect it is a form of modified anorexia. My eldest keeps telling me that Prince Charles is almost vegetarian, and I find myself snapping back that he is over 40 and he damn well wasn't living on beansprouts when he was 14 and growing."

In the light of such anxieties, parents might be initially glad to hear of a magazine for child vegetarians. The Vegetarian Society's *Greenscene* is now on its eighth issue, claims a readership of 10,000 of its junior members, intends to go on public sale and could have been a wonderful vehicle for nutritional advice. I have to tell you that it is not. *Greenscene* seems to me a zappy, slangy, well-produced hymn to every kind of illogicality and cant. It is a lost opportunity, proselytising where it could have helped, narrow-minded where it could have been liberating. It makes you tear your hair out.

Take the star interview with television astronomer Heather Couper. Blithely she tells of refusing all meat at school and eating only the vegetables (a classic route to malnutrition). Sentimentally, she explains that her reason for giving up fish is not overfishing, but a friend's comment that a cod in a tank had "big brown eyes" like hers. The interviewer, in flaxine style, merely says "oo-er, spooky!" and commends her as "brilliantly sensible".

On it goes, through cartoon strips about Space Sheep and Astro Pig, trendy imprecations against "Prat of the Year" John Gummer, horror pictures of battery animals, environmental sermons (all with a vegetarian bias) and endless puns for gifts and right-on toilettries to "Spice up your Grimbo". When a poor 14-year-old convert writes in saying: "I feel so guilty... in a way I was a murderer," the editor cries "Wo ya! This is the stuff that fills my heart with joy!"

Even allowing for the shrill tone of all teenage magazines, the thing is infuriating. It makes no constructive use of teenage idealism, but is carefully calculated to



A recipe for problems: *Greenscene* magazine claims a readership of 10,000, but they are still in need of nutritional knowledge

harass sentimentality, self-doubt, guilt and clubbiness. Logic is never allowed to get in the way of sentiment: there are many sweet pictures and references to pet cats and dogs, whose necessary diet of meat supports a vast processing industry. There is lip-service to the ozone layer yet countless puns for pop records, artificial leather, beauty products, cuddly toys, stickers and jewellery, all of which are unnecessary luxuries produced in fuel-burning factories. There are idyllic pictures of cows and sheep, but no mention of the fact that if everyone went vegetarian none would be bred, and our landscape legacy of grassland and

grazing-marshes would be lost forever. The sole message is that as long as you do not put meat in your mouth, you are "Wo ya!" and groovy. The recipes are excellent but few, and there is no nutritional advice with them. With persistence and ingenuity, a family can feed a vegetarian child to healthy maturity. The real disaster is that by using the troubled compassion of children to put them off meat altogether, a vast opportunity is wasted. For it is true that much factory farming is disgustingly cruel: it is true that government has been complacent over diseases such as BSE and over animal drugs. It is also true

that we eat — and, above all, waste — too much meat. But vegetarianism is a blunt instrument. Out in the real world, there do exist organic and welfare-minded farmers producing animals reared with kindness: economically, so far, it is hardly worth their while. Most of the population only bothers about price, and the worried few turn their back on meat altogether. If children and teenagers pestered their parents to buy less meat, and buy it from organic growers or genuinely humane chicken farms, there might be hope of a new balance. Or they might take an interest in the Humane Slaughter

Association, which lobbies for careful transport and killing: after all, even the RSPCA could find only 6.6 per cent of animals improperly stunned at slaughter in a recent survey, so public interest and pressure could abolish that small percentage entirely. Energetic teenagers who care could be the key to a genuine consumer revolution: instead, they are being soft-soaped into a faddish obsession with inner purity. Forgive me if I rant. I am practising for the day, a few years hence, when my own children become Teenage Militant Hero Vegetarians. We shall have some damn good arguments.

Thank you as she is written

Do children still write letters of gratitude for gifts after Christmas?

"THANK you very much for the nice gloves you sent me for Christmas. They were something I wanted — but not very much." This thank you letter sent to a fortunately amused granny is just the tip of the etiquette surrounding children's thank you letters.

Letter-writing is not an entirely lost art. A straw poll among ten junior scribes and their mothers revealed that three ten-year-olds pen their own letters, five eight-year-olds rely on mothers to make polite phone calls instead, and one six-year-old writes the odd line to grandparents only. Thank you letters are a necessity in my eye, if not in my children's. A certain amount of cajoling and threatening goes into persuading my six-year-old to scrawl a dozen or so versions of "Dear so-and-so". So far, his younger sister has been let off with a drawing expressing appreciation, plus an explanatory note at the bottom from me.

Pictures, in fact, can be a good way of introducing young gift recipients to the art of thank you letters, according to Lynette Burrows, the author of *Good Children* and mother of six budding writers, now aged from 12 to 22. "When they were younger we'd sit down at the kitchen table on December 27 and make line-cuts to print thank you letters and put personal messages on them. Another idea is to take a big piece of paper and draw an illustrated margin round it with the message 'Do you like this drawing? It's to say thank you for' and so on. Children should be taught to write or draw some kind of thank you letter. It breeds good habits for adulthood."



The words, of course, can make or break the missive. Mrs Burrows suggests adults provide a rough phrase framework which offspring could then embellish: "Examples might include 'Thank you very much; what Christmas was like; who I saw; what I did; what the others did' and so on."

Ivan Sokolov, a co-director of Parents Network, a support organisation, and the father of two boys aged 13 and 15, does not believe in forcing unwilling adolescents to produce the required result. "A parent has to act as a consultant and point out that people like receiving letters. It also helps to acknowledge a child's feelings by saying 'I know you'd rather play with your new game or go out with friends, but it would make your aunt feel good if you thanked her for the present she's taken so much time to choose.'"

"I'd see a phone call as acceptable, although older people might not. It's often a generation issue, with older people expecting traditional, courteous values."

ONE might argue that it is up to parents to perpetuate those traditional, courteous values, starting young. Helen Crisp, a 29-year-old mother of two and a financial manager for Exploring Parenthood (another advisory organisation for parents), says forming good writing habits early breeds courtesy for life. "My own mother used to make me do mine before I went back to school, and if she didn't receive them from other children she might blacklist them on her present list the following year. I don't think there's anything wrong in being forced to write. It certainly made me continue to do so, some 20 years later."

JANE BIDDER

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Good Children by Lynette Burrows is published by Newpoint Publishing, price £4.95

Putting men to paper

Magazines for men carry their share of articles on love and sex — but all written by women



GQ's Alexandra Shulman

The woman editor of the mass-market men's magazine, *GQ*, is frustrated: she simply cannot find men to write about sex. Since taking the helm of the glossy Condé Nast publication last February, Alexandra Shulman, aged 33, has discovered a distinct reluctance among male writers to venture into what, to them at least, appears to be virgin territory. "It has long been legend that whenever men gather together — from the locker room to the bar — they will happily discourse on any subject under the sun, so long as it isn't women or relationships," Miss Shulman says. "I now believe that the taboo extends to writing, too. And it is not that they are too embarrassed to bring the subject up because I am female. It's simply that they prefer to sit at a word-processor and wax lyrical about tennis, wine, chess, even pinball machines. But 'The Glory of the Breast' 'The Mysteries of the Male Orgasm'? Forget it."

She acknowledges, of course, that until recently there was in this country no literary forum, outside fiction and "girlie magazines", for male writers to explore relationships and sex. "So they haven't had a lot of practice. But I've come to the conclusion that the clichéd 'new man', willing to discuss his emotions in public, is nothing more than media myth."

This "peculiarly British, male cynicism" (as Miss Shulman describes it) is evidently not a trait restricted to men who live by the pen. Eleanor Stephens, the editor of the successful Channel 4 series *Sex Talk*, which finishes next week, encountered similar reluctance among heterosexual men when she sought to recruit them for intimate discussion groups.

"The individuals who were most open were invariably women — both straight and lesbian," she says. "We found that despite any possible Aids backlash, homosexual men were also extremely willing to come forward and bare

their souls. But only a very small number of straight men responded to our initial invitation, which gave us little choice when assembling studio groups."

Ms Stephens feels the problem is because "British people have a problem with pleasure. There is a puritanical legacy of repression." Women, she says, have begun to break down the taboo — partly since the advent of magazines such as *Cosmopolitan*, which have for 20 years explored every inch of the human psyche and physique. "Ironically, it has left the British male deeply confused about how to relate to that so-called liberated woman."

On the other side of the Atlantic, Miss Shulman's counterpart encounters no such problems. "On the contrary," says Art Cooper, the editor of *GQ* in the United States. "In the States it is hard to find a man or woman who

will not write about sex at the drop of a condom. If a male writer has a 'performance problem', shall we say, he immediately leaps out of bed and writes an article about it. Men are writing about sex more candidly than ever in the past, sometimes to the point of overkill, where you think 'do I want to know that much about someone?'. Mr Cooper thinks that if Miss Shulman succeeds in "unblocking" her British writers, the magazine's 60,688 circulation may soar. "We have found overwhelmingly in our surveys of readers that the features about sex and relationships poll highest. The all-time winner, in fact, was a very explicit piece on 'sacrobatics'."

Perhaps Miss Shulman should simply follow the advice of Dylan Jones, the editor of *Arena*, the men's magazine which first hit the bookshelves four years ago. Mr Jones has all but abandoned trying to assign male writers to explore the subject of sex, deploying instead women such as Julie Burchill (on penis size) or (in the current issue) Kimberly Leston, who tackles the subject of fellatio. "Some years ago, I did commission a piece on fellatio, written by a man. It was very funny, and actually covered a lot of the same ground as this one; we couldn't run it, because in print it would have appeared far too sexist. A woman can get away with this. But if we changed Kimberly's name to Brian I think we'd be deluged with outraged letters."

Ms Stephens, who is devoting a six-part series to men's thoughts and feelings, says that 50 years ago Freud asked the question "What do women want?" "We have most of the answers to that conundrum now," she says. "In 1990 it is men who are the great mystery. Partly, it is because, even in 1990, British men would far rather write about war than write about sex."

JOSEPHINE FAIRLEY
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MESSIAH NIGHT ROYAL ALBERT HALL

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The records show he took the blows

Frank Sinatra is a mass of contradictions, but is indisputably the century's greatest popular singer. As Old Blue Eyes prepares to celebrate his 75th birthday, George Melly pays tribute

My least favourite Sinatra standard is *My Way*, a fake-humble, vainglorious load of schmaltz, but as he prepares to celebrate his 75th birthday next Wednesday, no one could deny him the right to sing it. Whether that right is a matter for wholehearted self-congratulation is open to question. It is true that the alleged Mafia connection was never made to stick but, although one must accept this, his public record has often been deplorable. Protected by goons and surrounded by sycophants, he could be absurdly arrogant. Even for his time, his male chauvinism was well over the top. He courted the White House regardless of the propriety of its occupant. He was given to brawling and heavy drinking, and could afford to buy his way out of trouble.

On the credit side he has raised millions for charity and, more impressively, was often spontaneously generous to those down on their luck. He was a courageous fighter in adversity, a consistent anti-racist and, until John Kennedy chose, like a latter-day Henry V dismissing Falstaff, to humiliate him, he was a political idealist.

His biographers have differed widely as to how these conflicting aspects of this complex man add up, but not one of them, not even the consistently hostile Ms Kitty Kelley, has questioned his artistry. They all agree that he was the greatest popular singer of this century — the non-par.

He could take a banal lyric, a predictable tune, and lend it a poetry far beyond its merits. He could interpret a great song, apparently unassailable in itself, and wrest from it unsuspected layers of meaning, without betraying its essential qualities.

Only Billie Holiday, whom he has always acknowledged as his principal influence, is on his level as an interpreter. Only she had his ability to expose herself so rawly, to celebrate transitory happiness to the same heart-breaking effect.



Complex: Frank Sinatra

Despite my use of the past tense, Sinatra continues to record and appear before the public. He may still, who knows, aim a geriatric swipe at an obtrusive press photographer, or insult an unfriendly woman journalist. Nevertheless, at 75, his career, if not over, is in inevitable decline. When I last heard him, in 1984 at the Albert Hall, he was covering up his vocal shortcomings and stiffening limbs by cunningly drawing attention to them. Yet there was still a lot going for him. His timing, his audacious phrasing, his throw-away showmanship remained intact. Even so, it was a sentimental rather than an inspiring evening, a ritual rather than a happening. I had the sensation that Time was in the wings, glancing at his watch.

It was of no account, though. Sinatra's immortality is assured and — happily for us, even more for future generations — it will not have to depend on memory or hearsay.

His most creative years coincided with the invention of the long-playing record. The evi-

dence of his unique ability is preserved in its grooves.

Although I am old enough to have followed his whole career, I came to admire him comparatively late. During his debut as a swoon-inducing bobbysoxer idol, I was entirely committed to early jazz. I never gave Sinatra a thought; he was not black, he didn't sing classic blues, he was backed by white swing bands. Of course, gradually, he strode into my mind, glass in hand, coat over shoulder, cigarette dangling, but it was probably his Oscar-winning appearance in *From Here to Eternity* that persuaded me to take him seriously, to listen to his albums and realise just how close to jazz he was.

And how close was that? That ugly cliché "jazz orientated" is probably the most accurate definition. Certainly without jazz he would not have sounded the same. His attack, his beat notes, his ability to swing at any tempo were all part of his jazz inheritance; yet, despite his recordings with Count Basie and Duke Ellington, jazz was only one of the good fairies around his cradle in Hoboken. His contribution has been to link jazz feeling and superior popular song, to build a bridge. He was a hybrid of genius.

Almost from the start he knew exactly what he needed to back him: swinging, well-crafted arrangements by people like Nelson Riddle, Gordon Jenkins and Quincy Jones. He understood exactly the material he could handle best: songs of lonely despair in the small hours, of sophisticated seductions, of "uckets to romantic places", of wry regrets at the wounds inflicted by time, of wistful erotic memory. He couldn't help but be sexy; a potent mixture of arrogant stud and little boy lost.

His only serious failing was his occasional inability to resist gliding the lily to spoil the flawless lyrics of Cole Porter and others with "tip" embellishments even more embarrassing



The love of his life: yet Frank Sinatra found he could not deal with the film star Ava Gardner

today than when they were at least current slang. His spoken introductions, too, were at times crass, especially given his otherwise impeccable feeling for how to shape his act and build its climax.

But, then, the whole Sinatra persona is enigmatic. Dominated and driven by his formidable mother, he never escaped from the whore/madonna syndrome. He could not deal with Ava Gardner, the love of his life, because she refused to fulfil

either role, and handed out as good as she got. His disastrous relationship with the press was not all his fault. Once they had caught on to his inability to keep his cool, they goaded him until he broke, and then smugly deplored his lack of control. On the other hand, the unattractive Brat Pack was entirely his own doing. He had thechutzpah to rail against the bad behaviour of rock stars, but his own hell-raising was just as boorish and without even the excuse of

instant fame and money. In the end, though, none of this matters. Despite (perhaps because of) the chip on his shoulder, his arrogance and insecurity, his art touches us at a deeper level than we (and possibly he) realise. "And time," W.H. Auden wrote of a French literary monster of genius, "will pardon Paul Claudel. Will pardon him for writing well." Change "writing" to "singing" and it could apply equally to Francis Albert Sinatra.

The law of selection

How does an ambitious policeman reach the top?
By taking gruelling tests

The senior policeman has scarcely left the room before the chief constables burst forth with enthusiasm. "I thought he was excellent," one says. "I think he was lively, sure-footed and personable," another adds.

The selection of the next crop of Britain's highest ranking policemen is under way. During the past two weeks 100 superintendents and chief superintendents have been assessed at a hotel in Eastbourne by teams of chief constables and civilians for a place on an annual senior command course. Anybody who passes through the six-month course should achieve the rank of at least assistant chief constable.

This is also a testing time for the entire police service. Criticised for failing to keep or promote talent, it has belatedly recognised the need for up to 30 qualified officers to fill the top ranks each year.

During a three-day period candidates are split into sets of six, to be subjected to exercises which investigate their intelligence, numeracy, decisiveness and analytical skills. Each group of assessors, which is made up of two top officers and a layman, watches group exercises, and grades written tests and interviews. The system is based on that used by War Office selection boards in the second world war.

Although a candidate may be brilliant on paper, that will not be enough. "We will ask whether he has the steel to deal with problems, take decisions," an assessor says.

Curricula vitae can provoke scathing responses. "On the face of it, this is a shallow man," a police assessor says of a candidate. Another officer notes a candidate is moved by man's inhumanity to man, and comments: "As a policeman he should have got over that by now."

The candidates are asked to debate subjects including whether there are too many dogs, and the importance of green politics. One group argues energetically about dogs, without touching the issue of the increasing number of savage breeds. They are also asked to chair a committee of their peers.

The interviews can be crucial. The lay assessor takes the candidate through his private life, searching for depth and individual sparkle. The police assessors test professional competence. One officer delights the lay assessor, but another is dismissed as "lacking bottom".

Verdicts will be announced later this month. By that time the candidates will have recovered from a nerve-wracking experience. Last week one officer, told he was being given a committee exercise titled "Looming Crisis", replied: "It's been that for the last 48 hours."

STEWART TENDLER

Saturday Review



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RECORDS: ROCK

Synthetic extreme

Vanilla Ice: To the Extreme (SBK SBKLP9)
Various: The Hot Spot (Anilles AN0755)

WITH rock and pop albums being released in unprecedented quantity onto a fragmented market, the only distinguishing feature of many new releases is the minute variation they bring to a homogenised selection of familiar themes. Vanilla Ice has rapidly mastered the process of synthesis, as his rise to the top of the singles charts with "Ice Ice Baby" proves.

This single is a finely constructed confection, which owes some of its appeal to a sample from the Queen/Bowie track, "Under Pressure" (a matter currently in litigation, since "Ice Ice Baby" has already out-sold "Under Pressure"); over an album of 15 tracks, Ice's facility for mixing from a treasure trove of devices evaporates until only cliché remains. The title, then, is a misnomer. To the Extreme is nothing of the sort, being functional and moderate.

If the syncretism of Vanilla Ice is motivated by finance, the soundtrack to the new film noir by Dennis Hopper, The Hot Spot, appears to have been assembled according to superfluous principles. Just as sports fans debate the ultimate football team, so Hopper has imagined the band of his dreams and then made all the necessary telephone calls. Miles Davis plays lonely



Lone trumpeter: Miles Davis trumpet against John Lee Hooker's equally lonely guitar and vocals, and Earl Palmer supplies the heavy back beat. Jack Nitzsche, fondly remembered for his collaborations with Phil Spector and Neil Young, wrote the score. This is mood music in the non-pejorative sense, with the added frisson of answering the question, "What would it sound like if...?"

DAVID TOOP

THEATRE

'If it's not funny, it's my fault'

Chekhov, the Redgraves and a Soviet director:
Robert Gore Langton anticipates *Three Sisters*

A Russian language *Richard III* at the Roundhouse was the talk of the town ten years ago. The play was a critical triumph, performed by a company from Georgia in the Soviet Union and directed by Robert Sturua. Now Sturua, for the past 12 years artistic director of the Rustaveli Theatre in Tbilisi, is returning to the London stage with Chekhov's *Three Sisters* in a West End production starring the Redgraves. If the idea of a Georgian directing an English version of a Russian classic seems odd, then it is even odder still that this leading Soviet director, with some 60 productions under his belt, has never before staged a play by Chekhov.

Far from his home turf, Sturua is making good this gap with a very theatrical family. *Three Sisters* stars two sisters, Lynn and Vanessa Redgrave (as Olga and Masha), with their niece, Jemma Redgrave, as Irina. It is thus a family show, following the sisterly trend set by the Cusack daughters who, with their father Cyril, recently lent a touch of the blarney to Chekhov's masterpiece of provincial futility.

The story of this production is complicated, but Sturua has succeeded through the efforts of Thelma Holt, his mentor and unofficial London agent, and the producer of this commercial enterprise, Holt, a tireless theatre importer and the mastermind behind the National Theatre's foreign seasons, has exploited the mutual admiration between the performers and the director. Indeed, it was through Vanessa Redgrave's own independent company that Sturua's last production was brought to London briefly last year.

Having agreed on the Redgrave sisters, Holt supplied Sturua with a shortlist of supporting actors and he appears delighted with the resulting hand-picked team. In our interview he spoke only Russian, and through his assistant Helen Molchanoff (assisting as interpreter throughout rehearsals), he explained why he had never approached Chekhov before.

"Psychologically, Georgians are more theatrical than Russians," he says. "They don't much care for realism on stage and Chekhov writes realistic plays. Ostrovsky is more popular. Chekhov isn't staged very often. We are too close to Russia. If you make Chekhov very, very Georgian it becomes rather untrue, though, oddly enough, the problems of Chekhov's characters exist for us. Georgians don't speak openly about their suffering, they are more inclined to laugh, to conceal their

private drama and pretend everything is fine."

He believes the English tradition of doing Chekhov probably follows the Russian: over-rationalised characters with a heavy emphasis on the poetic weight of the unspoken. There has been of late a move away from the atmosphere of gentle sadness to something more mordant, but Sturua's approach will be to highlight the comedy, the unpredictability and sadness of the characters, while also establishing an ensemble feel which is the hallmark of his work at the Rustaveli. Excessive gloom is alien to the Georgian temperament.

"It's impossible to stage it without humour. Chekhov attached so much importance to irony. If it's not funny, it's my fault."

The problem of translating Russian-ness is not a big issue for Sturua. "I think that with all great dramatists different nations just switch on to him in their own way. The psychology of the English is different, they can't really play Russians; but Chekhov is universal, each nation finds itself reflected in the work."

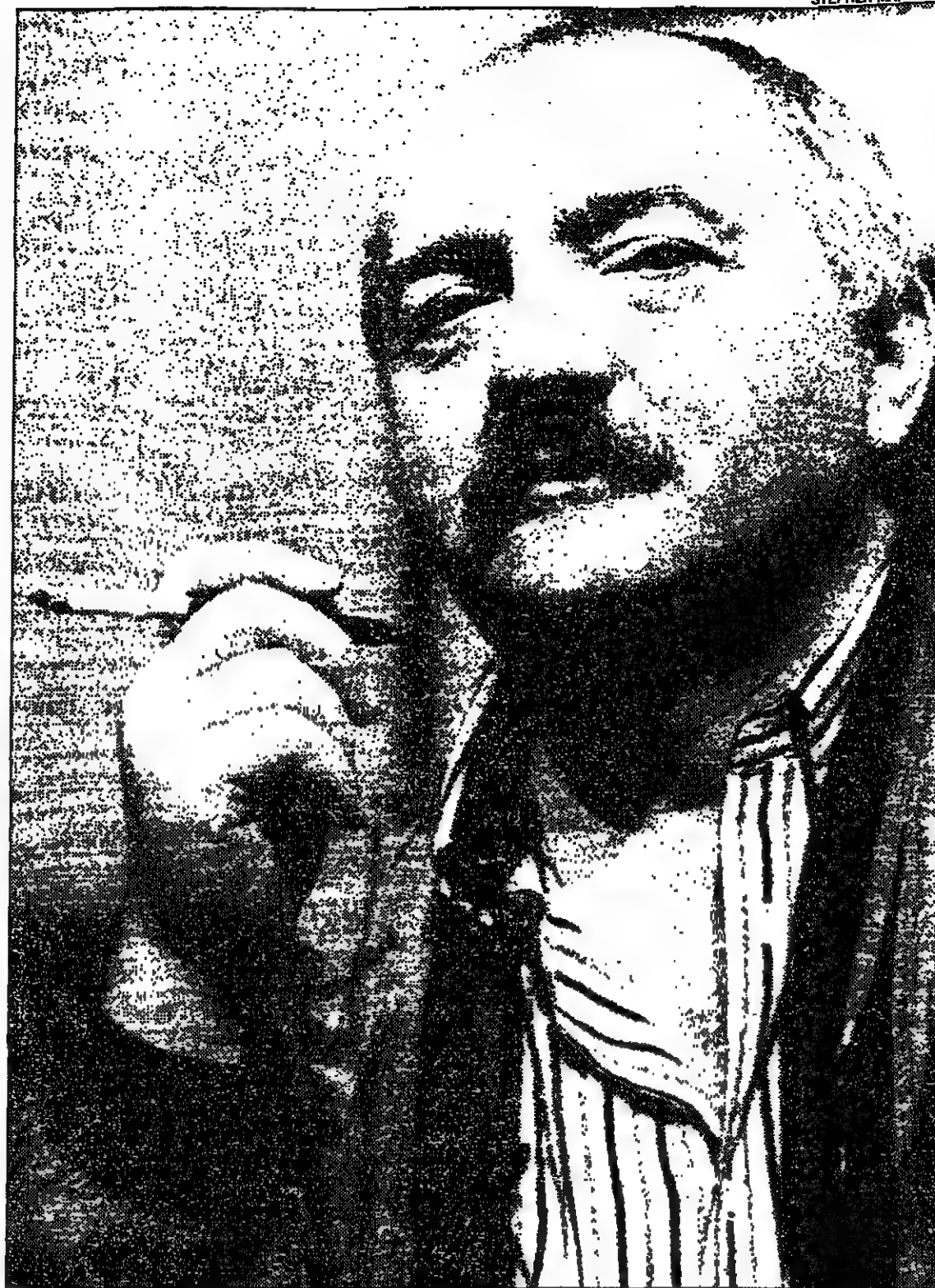
As for the gimmick of having the stage dominated by members of the same family, though it has huge box-office appeal, Sturua does not necessarily regard it as an artistic advantage. "It could help or hinder. The theatre is a strange thing. People who hate one another off-stage can work brilliantly together, while close relationships often get in the way of the job. In this instance it is a help

'Relationships often get in the way. It is a help because the Redgraves work intuitively, always helping one another'

because the Redgraves work intuitively, always helping one another. I like the fact that such great actors as Vanessa and Lynn give me no complications. They have turned out to be ordinary people, not stars."

Back at home, the Rustaveli has always played a prominent part in the Georgian nationalist movement, paying a heavy price in the 1930s when many of Sturua's predecessors were shot. Now independence seems a possibility. Meanwhile, the status of Moscow has changed: the city the sisters dream of has, he says, "become a cauldron and no one knows what sort of soup will emerge from it. History is taking place before our eyes. Whether it means world catastrophe or the start of something new, no one knows."

Chekhov still touches on the problem. We see in this play characters who get together and could actually do something, while all they actually do is talk, talk, talk. In some way it echoes today on a deep level — the fact is that the most splendid character of the play dies when even the murderer wants to



Robert Sturua: first time he has staged Chekhov in 60 productions, and far from his home turf

prevent it; there's the tragedy." Sturua now directs on the international opera circuit; his next project is Tchaikovsky's *Eugene Onegin* in Bologna. He argues that with so much political theatre going on in the Soviet parliament, in Georgia there is now a demand for the permanent human values of the classics. This is not to say his output is uncontentious. Next year Thelma Holt may bring his *King Lear* to London. "I staged my *Lear* five years

ago before the process of democratisation in Russia had begun. Now I find that Shakespeare has foretold the events of my country. The dictator leaves, and freedom is given to the children, but the children are even worse than their father because they've been educated to become amoral. The state collapses and everyone dies. On tour in Italy the headlines said: 'The Rustaveli King Lear: the apocalypse of the Soviet Union.' But I didn't think of it in

those terms when I staged it." Sturua's presence in Britain is part of the burgeoning cultural exchange now possible between East and West. He believes the mix is healthy, the barriers in a theatrical sense, artificial. "I believe all great writers have no nationality and all bad writers belong to one nationality — the nation of the talentless." Is this true of directors, too? "Unfortunately, yes," he says. "I belong to one country, but I don't know which."

CLASSICAL MUSIC

Feast of modern talents

THE Huddersfield Contemporary Music Festival is now so capacious it can accommodate more themes than several. This year the Alfred Schnittke birthday concert, about which Stephen Pettitt wrote last week, was just the prelude to a wide-ranging retrospective, which itself was only part of a grand survey of new music from Russia and adjacent states.

Besides all that, there was a strong Australian injection, and room still for celebrations of Toru Takemitsu and Gavin Bryars. The sheer quantity and diversity, though, would be pointless without Huddersfield's other distinctions: high standards of performance and healthy audiences.

In the closing two days the New London Chamber Choir, under Paul Webster, arrived to offer typically strong performances and a stimulating contrast between John Tavener's music and that of eastern European composers. There was a similar commitment to the sacred, notably by Arvo Part and Sofia Gubaidulina. Tavener, even when setting Greek and Hebrew, sounded distinctly Anglican in this context, whereas the rudimentary character of Part's music, reduced to the fewest possible modal phrases and concords, seems to strip away any sign of particular cultural traditions other than that of the composer's own output.

His settings of German texts of the seven Magnificat anthems for Advent, written in 1988 and being sung here for the first time, are marked throughout by his harmonic style, and also by his gift for luminous vocal scoring. They sounded wonderful in the church acoustic of St Paul's Hall, and deserve a life in the liturgy of cathedrals.

The choir also gave rhythmically crisp but nicely full-toned accounts of Stravinsky's compact liturgical pieces of the 1920s, and of his late anthem, *The Dove Descending*, which here, among so much unashamed tonality, was a lonely climb into the serial ether, and a nagging reminder of other musical worlds. It says something about the state of contemporary music that these two minutes of Stravinsky, who has been dead for nearly 20 years, should have provided the most challenging moment in three concerts.

There were certainly other pleasures, though, elsewhere. Alexander Balanescu and Elisabeth Perry surprised with a gently wayward piece for two violins, written the day before by Gavin Bryars and called *The Corinthian Middle*. It is typical of Bryars that we should be left waiting for the beginning and the end. Also in this programme, the short *Still Life with a Violin* was probably not the best introduction to the highly praised young Polish composer Hanna Kulenty, and the Schnittke theme burned itself out with the mildly amusing *Moz-Art*.

The grand finale was left to the Sydney percussion quartet Synergy, brought half-way across the world simply for its two Huddersfield concerts. It began with an astonishingly tight, unanimous rattle through Cage's *Third Construction*, and if the Australian pieces that followed were less impressive, its closing display of energy, speed and power in Japanese taiko drumming was spectacular. It was a pity no winning work could be found in the competition to provide them with a new British piece. Next year the festival intends to pursue this attractive policy of giving visiting ensembles some British music to take home with them, so that Huddersfield can become a worldwide instigator as well as a receiving centre.

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BUSINESS

Executive Editor
David Brewerton

FRIDAY DECEMBER 7 1990

Iraqi promise cuts price of oil to \$26

By MARTIN BARROW AND MICHAEL CLARK

HOPES that the Gulf tension might be resolved without a war sent oil prices tumbling to the levels of August, when Iraq invaded Kuwait. A promise by President Saddam Hussein to release all western hostages pushed oil below \$26 a barrel in volatile trading. In London, January Brent touched a low of \$25.43 before recovering to \$26.55. New York opened \$1.24 down at \$26.05 and slipped to \$25.25 but rallied to \$26. Lawrence Eagles, an analyst with GNI Commodities in

London, said: "The immediate reaction was to sell the market sharply. Traders are getting very excited about the prospect of peace." The sudden fall left prices just \$5 above the levels before Iraq invaded Kuwait on August 2. Product prices have also fallen sharply and a fresh round of petrol price cuts is expected. Some analysts believe prices have almost shed the crisis premium. An American trader preparing for the New York futures market opening said: "The war premium is disappearing. The back

months should start to reflect the fundamentals if there is going to be no war." Prices have declined 21 per cent in the last five working days, weakened by peace hopes, a substantial increase in Opec production and falling energy demand from industrialised nations. Growing hopes that a peaceful solution to the conflict can be achieved saw the FT-SE 100 index come within ten points of the 2,200 level, before closing below its best as share prices in New York failed to hold on to early gains. The index ended 24.9 points higher at 2,177.5.

The prospect of a sharp drop in oil revenues left shares in the leading oil companies lower. BP fell 9p to 330p, Enterprise Oil, 20p to 614p and Lasso 18p to 395p. Government securities finished the session sporting gains of almost 11 at the longer end. Falling oil prices are expected to result in lower fuel costs and should help reduce the rate of inflation. They may also speed up a cut in interest rates.

Turnover in the equity market rose to 559 million shares, inflated by a large number of bed and breakfast deals designed to establish a tax loss. But dealers complained of little real follow through from the institutions, which seem to be concentrating on next week's electricity flotation. Opec is due to meet in Vienna on December 12, when members are expected to discuss how production will be curtailed to accommodate Iraq and Kuwait once the embargo is lifted. Analysts believe many producers, including cash-starved Iraq, will resist substantial reductions of their official quotas, resulting in an oil glut just as the West will be seeking to reduce its unusually high stocks.

In New York, oil prices plunged and Wall Street soared in heavy market trading, but by lunchtime the steam had run out of both markets. A drop of more than \$2 from the oil price was more than halved by noon, when West Texas Crude for delivery in January was off just 99 cents at \$26.30. It has fallen more than 20 per cent since Friday.

Oil traders reported near panic conditions. But the oil futures market did not have to implement contingency plans to halt trading if chaos threatened the market. Oil shares such as BP, Chevron and Texaco gave up as much as \$1 and could have further to fall. Most analysts forecast the price of crude to stabilise in the low to middle \$20s. At its peak, oil hit \$41 a barrel. Meanwhile, the dollar remained nervous, falling almost 1½ cents against the pound to \$1.9403.

GrandMet laughs all the way to £919m

PETER TREVNOR



Recession? what recession? Sir Allen Sheppard, right, jokes with David Nash, finance director, before the GrandMet meeting yesterday

GRAND Metropolitan, the food, drinks and retailing combine, braved increasingly difficult trading conditions as the recession hit to raise its pre-tax profits by £187 million, or almost 26 per cent, to £919 million in the year to end-September, writes Martin Walker.

Sir Allen Sheppard, the chairman, pledged further earnings growth in the current year despite hard times ahead. "It's raining pretty hard out there. There's a recession going on, but so far it's not showing in our businesses," he said. A final dividend of 12.8p makes a total of 20.4p, up from 17.75p.

Earnings per share rose from 55.6p to 64.1p. Earnings growth this year would be held back by economic conditions, the effect of the continuing high dollar, fewer property disposals and an increased tax charge, he said. Although the company hedges by having all its borrowings in dollars, every five cents rise in the pound's value takes £10 million off profits.

Trading profits went over the £1 billion mark for the first time to £1,082 million against £967 million. Property profits were little changed, but interest charges slipped from £280 million to £239 million. Interest cover

on GrandMet's debt, once of great concern to the City, therefore rose from 3.6 times to 4.8 times. GrandMet, which reckons about 10 per cent of its shares are held overseas, plans an American listing in March. The group is going through a period of consolidation, said Sir Allen, but it still has two pieces of unfinished business. One is the public houses-for-breweries swap with Courage, which was finally cleared by Peter Lilley, the trade secretary, last month.

Negotiations are now being completed with Courage, which is owned by Elders IXL, the debt-laden Australian conglomerate, and there is a

target date for completion during February. GrandMet is also locked in dispute with Brent Walker Group, chaired by the embattled George Walker, over the latter's purchase of the William Hill betting shop chain last year. GrandMet is suing for £30 million it says it is still owed and the case should be heard at the end of January.

"To use a technical accounting term, the submission they have made to us is plain wrong," said Sir Allen. "I described it to George Walker in slightly more colourful language."

Tempus, page 27

'Virtual standstill in retail sales'

By PHILIP BASSETT, INDUSTRIAL EDITOR

RETAIL sales came to a virtual standstill last month, and employment in retailing - previously a growth sector - showed its first-ever fall.

But retail leaders said that sales in the Christmas period had now started, and reported some confidence about the outlook for Christmas trade. The monthly Confederation of British Industry (CBI) Financial Times distributive trades survey confirms the dramatic slump that has hit retailing because of the squeeze on demand enforced by the government's high interest rate policy and the consequent fall in consumer spending.

Nigel Whitaker, chairman of the CBI's distributive trades panel, admitted that sales growth, in retailing was now at its lowest since the survey began more than seven years ago, but based on anecdotal reports at the panel meeting he said: "Christmas has now started", and it was "on track so far".

However, the survey shows only a flat expectation about

sales in December, with the balance of the volume of sales - the difference between expectations of falling and rising sales - projected at 21 per cent for December, the same as in November.

Expectations for November proved to be out of line with reported sales, which showed a balance of 1 per cent - the lowest on record.

Retailers reported poor sales for the time of year with only mail order companies showing sales up on a year ago. Retailers expect their overall business position to deteriorate over the next three months, with a balance of -9 per cent not only the first fall in confidence for a year, but also the lowest on record.

The survey also shows that employment in retailing is now declining. The balance of -4 per cent on reported employment is the first negative figure on record, and fewer jobs are expected in the months ahead. Part-time jobs slid steeply to 3 per cent November from a balance of 23 per cent in August.

Motor trading shows its biggest fall in jobs for six years, at a balance of -31 per cent. Stocks held by motor traders are at their highest. While wholesalers' sales remained below 1989 levels, the balance of -7 per cent is better than -33 per cent for October.

Distributors are forecasting a worsening of their business position in the first fall in confidence for a year. The balance of -29 per cent for expected capital expenditure is also the lowest on record.

Mr Whitaker said the survey showed things were "tough, but not terminal". Doug Henderson, Labour's trade and industry spokesman, said the survey showed clearly there was "more than a shallow dip in the economic cycle - there is a recession that is deepening every day."

THE POUND

US dollar 1.9390 (+0.0165)
German mark 2.8672 (-0.0014)
Exchange Index 93.6 (same)

STOCK MARKET

FT 30 Share 1717.9 (+26.3)
FT-SE 100 2177.5 (+24.9)
New York Dow Jones 2614.11 (+3.71)
Tokyo Nikkei Avge 22563.10 (+359.38)
Closing Prices ... Page 31

MAJOR INDICES AND MAJOR CHANGES

Page 29

INTEREST RATES

London: Bank Base: 14%
3-month interbank 13½-13¾%
3-month eligible bills: 13-12¾%
US: Prime Rate 10%
Federal Funds 7¾%
3-month Treasury Bills 7.00-6.98%
3½-year bonds 10¼-10¼½%

CURRENCIES

London: New York: £1/\$1.9390
Paris: £1/\$1.9390
Frankfurt: £1/\$1.9390
Geneva: £1/\$1.9390
Zurich: £1/\$1.9390
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GOLD

London: Gold: \$372.80 pm-\$370.00
close \$367.75-\$368.50 (£189.50-189.00)
New York: Comex \$371.25-\$371.75

NORTH SEA OIL

Brent (Jan) \$26.50 bid (\$27.30)
* Denotes latest trading price

TOURIST RATES

	Bank	Bank	Bank
Australia	2.60	2.45	2.45
Austria	2.60	2.45	2.45
Belgium	2.60	2.45	2.45
Canada	2.60	2.45	2.45
Denmark	2.60	2.45	2.45
France	2.60	2.45	2.45
Germany	2.60	2.45	2.45
Greece	2.60	2.45	2.45
Hong Kong	2.60	2.45	2.45
India	2.60	2.45	2.45
Italy	2.60	2.45	2.45
Japan	2.60	2.45	2.45
Malaysia	2.60	2.45	2.45
Netherlands	2.60	2.45	2.45
New Zealand	2.60	2.45	2.45
Portugal	2.60	2.45	2.45
Spain	2.60	2.45	2.45
Sweden	2.60	2.45	2.45
Switzerland	2.60	2.45	2.45
Taiwan	2.60	2.45	2.45
Thailand	2.60	2.45	2.45
USA	2.60	2.45	2.45
Yugoslavia	2.60	2.45	2.45

Hanson signals further expansion

By JOHN BELL
CITY EDITOR

HANSON, the Anglo-American industrial conglomerate, reported a 27th successive year of increased profits, dividends and earnings per share and gave notice that further substantial acquisitions are on the way.

"We continue to be expansion minded. Our large cash balances and borrowing capability mean that we have the resources. We shall undoubtedly find an increasing

number of acquisition opportunities," said Lord Hanson.

Group profits at £1.26 billion for the year to end-September were 21 per cent ahead though at the lower end of City expectations. Fully diluted earnings per share grew 8 per cent to 19.9p despite a substantial increase in the equity base following conversion of the group's 10 per cent loan stock. The final dividend was 7.4p as forecast, making a total payment for

the year of 10.4p, a rise of 22 per cent.

After financing the £653 million purchase of Peabody, the largest American coal producer, cash balances at the year end were £6.9 billion, leaving the group with no net borrowings. Hanson Industries, the group's American arm raised profit 18 per cent to £416 million (£352 million) on sales £300 million higher at £3 billion.

Sir Gordon White, chairman of Hanson Industries,

said the refusal to use junk bonds to justify inflated prices for acquisitions had proved sound. Even in difficult economic circumstances, 20 Hanson Industries subsidiaries reported record profits.

Trading profit in Britain was a record £579 million, 19 per cent up on last time, on sales of £4.1 billion against £3.6 billion despite Hanson's exposure to the building and construction sectors.

Comment, page 27

De-Bonding Australia's fallen idol

FROM ROBERT COCKBURN
IN SYDNEY

ALAN Bond, the fallen icon of Australian success, is being revised out of political and business archives with the kind of haste that would make Stalin blush. For weeks, those in the know have been supplying cold beers, many brewed by one of Mr Bond's old companies, and taking bets on the fate of the last tycoon in Australia's corporate dream.

Mr Bond was arrested yesterday in Perth on a fraud charge in an enquiry that is rocking public life in Western Australia and netting some of the most famous names of the brash Aussie Eighties. For most Australians, Bond's demise outside Perth police station marked the formal end to the decade. A parking space was reserved for his Mercedes in a reverential process known as "arrest by appointment" for the procession of millionaires facing trial.

But, once inside, the man who made Australia proud, when he won the two-hour grilling by detectives. Australians, paying the price for corporate overreaching, have little sympathy. Angry shareholders of Mr Bond's former subsidiary, Bell Resources, yesterday voted to change the group's name to Australian Consolidated Investments. Geoff Hill, chairman, said it was part of the group's "de-Bonding". Others are finding it difficult to "de-Bond".

Once fêted as an Australian hero by his "good mates", Bob Hawke, the Labour prime minister, and Paul Keating, the treasurer, the official line on Mr Bond and other corporate failures, such as Christopher Scase and John Elliott, is one of disapproval. With the country gripped by recession, Mr Hawke and Labour are trying to forget the black-tie parties where they were photographed rubbing shoulders with the rich. But the nation's picture editors have not.

Mr Bond was charged under the securities code over the collapse of the Rothwells merchant bank and was

(£40,000). He appears in court again today. The charges relate to alleged attempts to rescue the bank in 1987. Mr Bond is accused of giving the bank \$Aus 17.5 million to woo other rescuers. He is charged with taking a fee of \$Aus 16 million and inducing Brian Coffin, a businessman, to invest \$Aus 6 million in a group that was technically dead. Mr Bond denied the charge.

The Rothwells scandal runs deeper. The rescue movement included the Labour administration in Western Australia, which having lost a fortune in corporate investments was dubbed WA Inc. Carmen Lawrence, the state premier, has announced a royal commission to investigate WA Inc dealings. In an imperious editorial in the Sydney Morning Herald, Brian Burke, the former state premier who conceived WA Inc and is now ambassador to Ireland and the Holy See, demanded that the federal government recall him, prompting the paper to say the credibility of Australia's ambas-

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NCR ready to fight \$6.4bn bid from AT&T

From PHILIP ROBINSON
IN NEW YORK

NCR Corporation, America's fifth largest computer maker, is drawing up plans to fight a \$90 a share hostile takeover bid from American Telephone & Telegraph, the telecommunications group.

NCR has dismissed the offer as grossly inadequate, but says it will negotiate at \$125 a share, a price which AT&T describes as "outrageous and totally unjustified". Under the terms of the current cash bid, AT&T could pay up to \$6.4 billion for NCR, the world leader in electronic cash machines for banks and supermarkets. At

\$125, the bid could reach \$9 billion. NCR, founded in Liverpool in 1885, employs 1,300 people at its factory at Kingsway West in Dundee, Tayside, and is building more engineering and manufacturing plants at Dunfermline in Fife. The group employs 3,500 staff throughout Europe.

Wall Street analysts say that if NCR is to mount a serious defence, it has only three main options: to find an alternative merger partner, raise the cash to take NCR private, or make a special large dividend payment to shareholders.

NCR has lowered the point at which its poison pill defence would be triggered from 20 per cent to 15.

If a raider gained more than 15 per cent of the company, NCR investors would have the right to buy cheap shares designed to make any bid too expensive for a predator.

Charles Exley, NCR's chairman, has threatened to resign if the AT&T bid succeeds.

In a letter to Robert Allen, the chairman of AT&T, Mr Exley said: "If you cannot offer NCR shareholders this fair value [of \$125 a share] we will use every means at our disposal to protect our shareholders and other shareholders against your attempt to deny them the inherent values of NCR."

However, Mr Allen wrote in reply: "All we have is a difference of

opinion on price, we should let your shareholders decide. We believe that we are offering a full and fair price."

The two have been talking for almost a month. AT&T first offered \$85 a share, then \$90 in a share swap deal. The group has now offered cash. Some analysts expect the offer to be lifted closer to \$100 a share. In early trading on Wall Street, NCR shares had risen \$5 to \$91½, while those of AT&T were up \$¼ at \$30¼.

A successful bid would mark the start of the European advance of AT&T, which is valued on Wall Street at \$30 billion.

NCR is Europe's ninth largest computer maker, accounting for a

third of last year's \$5.9 billion sales, and almost 30 per cent of operating income.

Industry experts say the aggressive stance being taken by AT&T is much more than a move by the telecommunications group to prop up its small and ailing computer business by merging it with that of the successful NCR.

AT&T says it must grow in the computer business to achieve a grand plan of linking people, organisations and their information in a seamless global computer network.

Analysts say it would take much more than \$6 billion to achieve that kind of dominant market position from a standing start.

Pilkington slides to £103m

By GRAHAM SEARJEANT
FINANCIAL EDITOR

DISASTROUS market conditions in South America and Australasia pulled Pilkington's pre-tax profits down 30 per cent to £103 million in the six months to September, although combined profits from German, American and British flat and safety glass operations dipped only modestly.

The glass group has maintained its interim dividend at 2.93p per share, however, and Sir Antony Pilkington, the chairman, made it clear he intends to maintain the final dividend even if it has to be paid from reserves. "We have never reduced the dividend," he said.

Pilkington made small losses at its British insulation business, which, like glass, depends heavily on the housing market, and is lobbying for energy conservation grants to boost demand.

Talks are still held with several European groups to put the Barr & Stroud military optics business, which is suffering from a hiatus in demand due to European disarmament, into a joint venture. Sir Antony said Pilkington was not looking for an outright sale. Losses there were trimmed to £1.8 million.

A fundamental review is also being made of the international spectacle and contact lens division. The American contact lens business has been rationalised.

Comment, page 27

GUS pushes ahead to £177.8m as sales slip

By GILLIAN BOWDITCH

GREAT Universal Stores, the mail order, property and financial services group that owns Burberry, says that while trading conditions continue to be tough, the group's strong balance sheet, cash mountain and property assets will support it through the worst of the recession.

The group, whose chairman is Lord Wolfson of Marylebone, made pre-tax profits of £177.8 million (£166.2 million), after stripping out £4.3 million of property profits, in the six months to end-September. Sales fell from £1.26

billion to £1.18 billion. There was an extraordinary profit of £11.3 million from the sale of investments, while earnings rose from 44.6p a share to 48.2p. The interim dividend rises 1p to 12p.

The results were better than expected, leaving the ordinary shares 7p ahead at £13.55 and the A shares 18p to the good at £11.33.

GUS said that while trading conditions have been difficult throughout the year, home shopping sales have remained level. This translated into home shopping profits after tax of £50.3 million (£46.3 million).

Consumer and corporate finance suffered because of high interest rates and a downturn in car sales and house purchases, both of which led to low demand. However, profits rose from £36.2 million to £40.1 million, boosted by an increase in income from the cash mountain, which stood at £443 million at the end of the last financial year.

The retail products division, which includes Burberry, saw profits fall from £12.76 million to £11.1 million as the impact of tensions in the Middle East and a slowdown in tourism affected sales.

Property rentals rose from £16.8 million to £17.9 million. Less than 15 per cent of GUS's profits come from overseas, but the effect of currency movements wiped £2.6 million from profits.

The contribution from North America halved to £2 million, partly because of the closure of some of the group's Canadian activities.

Richard Pugh, deputy chairman of the group, said trading in the current half was more difficult than in the first half. He added, however, that the diversified nature of the group's operations, strong balance sheet liquidity and property value provide a measure of support that is helpful in present times.

Mr Pugh said: "The company maintains its endeavours to maximise income and net tangible assets per share, minimise costs and invest in the future."



Wolfson: shares rise

Demand slows for Smith & Nephew

By OUR CITY STAFF

SMITH & Nephew, the pharmaceutical group that makes Elastoplast, says there has been a slackening in demand from British retailers for the group's toiletries products, which has led to a fall in pre-tax profits levels.

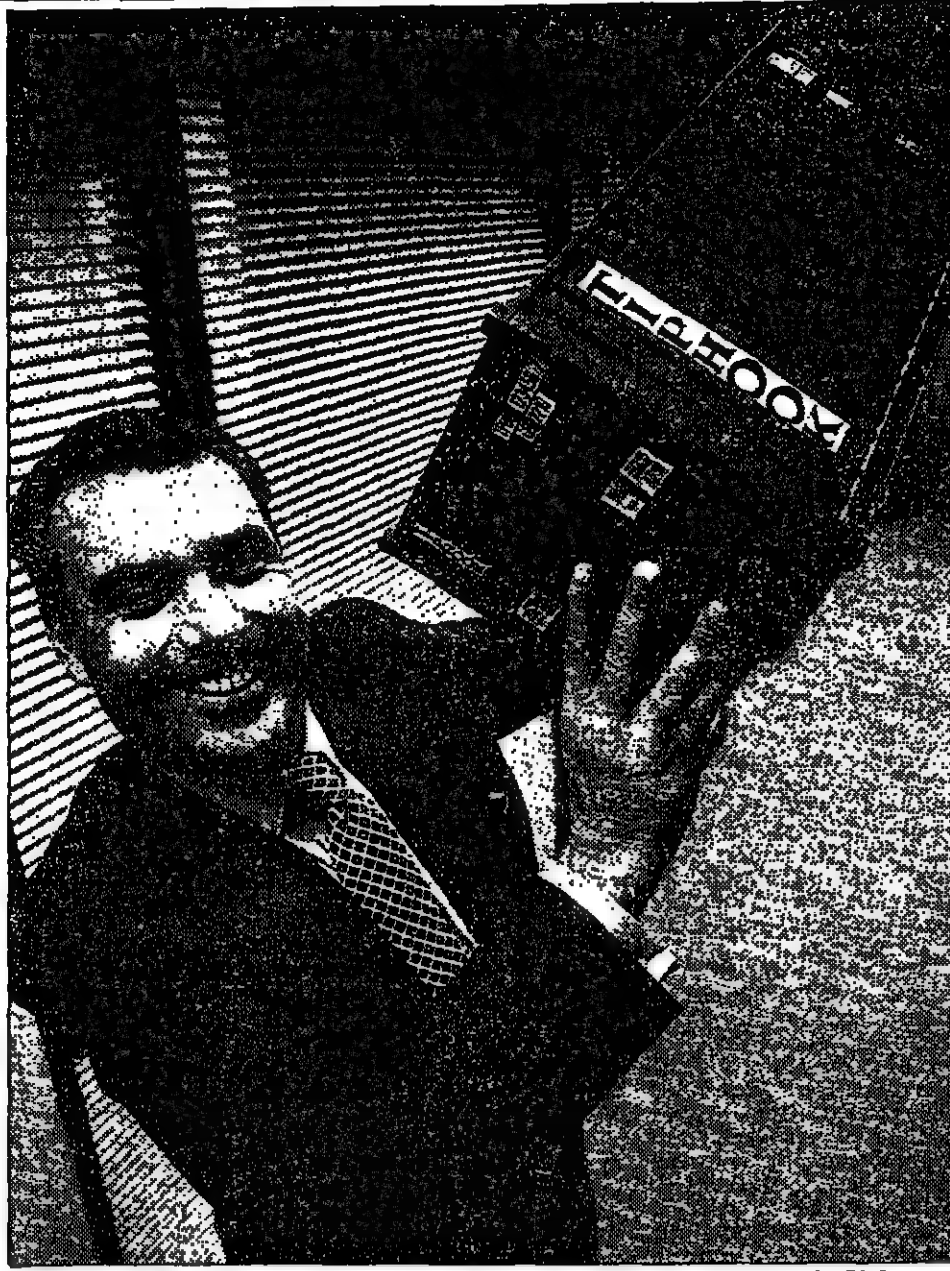
S&N's pre-tax profit for the nine months to October 6 fell 3 per cent to £97.1 million. Sales rose 5 per cent to £534,000. Excluding the effects of exchange rates and business disposals, the underlying growth in sales was 8 per cent.

Earnings per share were unchanged at 6.8p. The interest charge fell 53 per cent to £3.2 million and gearing is now 33 per cent. There is an extraordinary charge of £11.4 million in the nine months,

due to the cost of withdrawing from the examination glove market in America.

The group says trading in the second half of the year has been more difficult than anticipated. Government pressure on healthcare expenditure led to reduced spending by hospitals, which affected S&N's sales in the third quarter, and £2 million of export sales to the Middle East were lost due to the Gulf instability. On a brighter note, worldwide sales of Elastoplast and orthopaedic products showed strong growth.

S&N has made no provision for damages of \$96 million, awarded against the group by a Californian court, but it is appealing against the award. The shares fell 5p to 100¼p.



No containing Tiphook: Robert Montague is planning a venture in the Soviet Union

Containers purchase helps Tiphook soar to £25.2m

By GEORGE SIVELL

TIPHOOK, now the world's third largest container rental group, raised interim pre-tax profits from £10.1 million to £25.2 million in the six months to end-October.

The figures reflect the acquisition of 200,000 containers from Sea Containers in the wake of the bid battle and a further improvement in profit margins.

Earnings growth was much slower, however, up 25 per cent to 21.9p a share.

But shareholders paid £240 million of the \$537 million Sea Containers purchase price via a rights issue.

The half-year dividend rises 30 per cent to 3.5p net and the shares rose 4p to 369p.

Tiphook, which was founded by Robert Montague, 12 years

ago, is not unduly troubled by any downturn in the UK.

Only ten per cent of Tiphook turnover, up from £75 million to £131 million in the half-year, comes from the UK.

Half of Tiphook sales come from America, the rest from Europe.

Mr Montague is now looking to eastern Europe for expansion opportunities and is in the throes of negotiating to establish a joint venture in the Soviet Union with Sovtransavto, the state transport group.

Tiphook feels it has something to offer the ailing Soviet transport infrastructure, which is the cause of present food shortages.

Tiphook is offering to provide training and expertise to

the new, as yet unnamed, joint venture.

In return, the company will win the right to rent containers to the joint venture in return for hard currency.

At the moment, Tiphook has 300 of its containers on rent in the Soviet Union.

Stockbrokers are forecasting a rise in full-year pre-tax profits from £33 million to £75 million for the year to end-April 1991.

At the end of October, borrowings stood at £640 million, up from £582 million reported at the end of April, on shareholders' funds of £246 million, up slightly from the £220 million last reported.

Gearing, however, is expected to fall to around 2.25 from the present 2.6 at the full-year end.

Anglo United debt hopes

By MARTIN BARROW

ANGLO United, the fuel distribution group, says it is on schedule to repay borrowings incurred after the £478 million acquisition of the larger Coalite Group in August 1989.

The company, which assumed £440 million of debt to finance the contested takeover, has repaid £195 million

after completing a series of disposals and expects to repay a further £70 million by March 31, 1991, its year-end.

A bridging loan of £50 million will be repaid on or before February 22 as planned. Banking arrangements require further repayment of £70 million over the next four

financial years, which the company considers to be well within its capability.

Anglo United unveiled interim figures showing taxable profits down sharply from £5.97 million to £1.12 million in the six months to end-September. Earnings declined from 4p a share to 1.3p. The interim dividend is being maintained at 0.2p a share.

Turnover virtually doubled from £165.64 million to £320.87 million, and trading profits rose from £7.3 million to £15.53 million. Businesses that will remain part of the enlarged Anglo United include the 95 per cent to £11.82 million.

The disposal of a property in Wandsworth, south London, netted £7.86 million and associated company profits were £1.47 million, making a total income of £24.23 million, against £14.43 million.

But interest charges were sharply higher at £23.11 million (£8.46 million).

David McErlain, the chairman, who is giving up his dual role as chief executive after the appointment of John Gairbairn as managing director, said that disposals had proceeded in line with Anglo United's original strategy, despite deteriorating economic conditions.

Since September 1989, Anglo United has netted a total of £199.6 million through disposals. Still to be sold are Coalite's auto dealerships and interests in scientific instruments, together with Pozament, a manufacturer of grouting materials, and Free-

Greycoat profits surge by 51%

By OUR CITY STAFF

PRE-TAX profits at Greycoat, the property developer and investment group, have jumped 51 per cent to £13.2 million in the six months to September. However, Geoffrey Wilson, chairman, has warned that this growth will not continue in the second half. The company is paying an unchanged dividend of 2.3p.

The results once again confirmed Greycoat's reputation for financial ingenuity. Only £3.7 million of interest has been taken through the profit and loss account. A further £17.5 million of interest has been added to the cost of the company's development properties, together with £2.4 million of administrative expenses and £3.29 million of bond discount accretion.

Greycoat's strategy is to ensure that when its three big developments are complete, the company's property in-

overheads, tax and dividends. All three of its big London office developments, including the new building above Charing Cross station, are fully let. One is finished, while the other two are near completion.

Greycoat's next developments are in the very early stages. "As and when we begin to move out of the present recession we shall be able to take advantage of the important development projects we have at present at the planning stage," said Mr Wilson.

At Paternoster Square, where Greycoat is in partnership with Park Tower Realty and Mitsubishi Estate, a public exhibition of the consortium's plans for the area will be held in the new year. The consortium owns the central 4.2 acres of the site next to St Paul's Cathedral.

BUSINESS ROUNDUP

Turnover advances 25% at Euromoney

EUROMONEY Publications, the financial publisher headed by Sir Patrick Sergeant, former city editor of the *Daily Mail*, unveiled pre-tax profits ahead 18 per cent to £8.82 million (£7.4 million) in the year to end-September. Turnover increased 25 per cent to £34 million. *Euromoney*, the flagship magazine that accounts for about a fifth of business, suffered from the worldwide fall in financial advertising, although revenues from surveys were at record levels.

Advertising revenue declined by about 15 per cent. The company said that spending on advertising and promotion generally is down and looks like falling further. Earnings per share rose 16 per cent from 24.02p to 27.9p. The final dividend is lifted to 12p (10.5p), making an increased total of 18.5p (16p) for the year. The shares firmed 5p to 34½p.

Profits rise at Tunstall

PRE-TAX profits at Tunstall Group, the security equipment group, advanced to £5.13 million (£3.11 million) in the year to September, on turnover down to £47.4 million (£52.1 million). Gearing stands at 33.4 per cent (152.6 per cent). The final dividend was 3p (2.75p), making a total of 5p (4.5p) for the year. Earnings per share jump to 20.3p (12.6p).

Bid by Perrier and Smurfit

FRANCE'S Source Perrier is part of a group organised by Ireland's Jefferson Smurfit Group that has made an offer to buy three French makers of corrugated cardboard owned by Georgia-Pacific of America, Perrier said. Perrier is a major customer of Laurent, Espaly and Papeteries Etienne which have combined annual revenues of about Fr900 million.

BTP raises dividend

BTP, the specialist chemicals and industrial group, unveiled operating profits ahead by 24 per cent from £7.1 million to £8.83 million, on turnover up 22 per cent from £60.1 million to £73.1 million. Pre-tax profits stood at £8.32 million in the six months to end-September (£9.6 million).

Operating profits from the chemicals division rose from £3.8 million to £4.7 million, biocides climbed from £1.5 million to £1.8 million, and industrials grew £1.8 million to £2.3 million. Earnings per share rose from 6.52p to 7.39p, and the interim dividend improved to 2.95p (2.75p).

Macdonald 81% ahead

MACDONALD Martin Distilleries, producer of Glenmorangie single malt Scotch whisky, increased pre-tax profits by 81 per cent to £5.17 million during the six months to the end of September on turnover 27 per cent higher at £16.37 million. Higher profits reflected rising sales volumes. Interim dividends are 2p (1.60p) per 'A' share and 1p (0.80p) per 'B' share.

Brent Walker board change

WILFRED Aquilina has stepped down as finance director of Brent Walker. Last night, a spokesman for the company confirmed that Mr Aquilina would be retained as a consultant. George Walker, Brent Walker's chairman and chief executive, is also thought to be considering the appointment of two new non-executive directors and the splitting of his current dual role.

Call for Goodman aid

GOODMAN International's bank creditors have called on the Irish government to help rescue the meat processing group, which owes £1460 million (£424 million). A statement from the creditor banks said that "positive financial support" from the Irish authorities should form part of any rescue package.

Goodman blames its difficulties on sanctions halting trade with Iraq, which owes the company £180 million. The Irish government has not officially said whether it is willing to provide rescue funds.

Control Securities down to £13.3m

By MATTHEW BOND

NAZMU Virani's Control Securities is weathering the storm in the property market.

In the six months to end-September, the company sold £52 million worth of property. With rental income boosting the division's turnover to £61 million, the property division made operating profits of £16.8 million, only 7 per cent down on 1989.

Control's interest bill has risen 67 per cent to £9.9 million, but a buoyant performance from the company's leisure division limited the damage to a 10 per cent fall in group pre-tax profits to £13.3 million. A further £2.9 million of interest has been capitalised. Gearing, said Mr Virani,

was 68 per cent. The interim dividend is raised 10 per cent to 0.55p (0.5p).

Operating profits from Control's brewing, public houses and hotels division rose 138 per cent to £5.4 million. The division now has 820 public houses and the Belhaven brewery, which it bought two years ago for £18 million. It also has 23 hotels with a total of 5,000 bedrooms.

Mr Virani said: "The results demonstrate the pragmatism of our strategy in the present recessionary climate of only holding income-producing freehold assets, and our continuing to give prominence to asset backed leisure businesses."

COMPANY BRIEFS

AJ ARCHER (Fin)
Pre-tax: £5.6m (£6.34m)
EPS: 16.5p (17.1p)
Div: 5.25p, mktg 8.4p

AVESCO (Int)
Pre-tax: £302,000
EPS: 0.3p (3.2p)
Div: 0.5p (0.5p)

BROWN & TAWSE (Int)
Pre-tax: £2.17m (£4.82m)
EPS: 4.5p (10p)
Div: 2.85p (2.56p)

CLARKE HOOPER (Int)
Pre-tax: £1.73m (£1.65m)
EPS: 7.1p (6.5p)
Div: 1.7p (1.6p)

CLF YEOMAN (Int)
Pre-tax: £3.27m (£8.08m)
EPS: 5.6p (14.5p)
Div: Nil (2.5p)

CHANNEL EXPRESS (Int)
Pre-tax: £1.02m
EPS: 5.5p (4.5p)
Div: 1.2p (1p)

LATHAM (JAMES) (Int)
Pre-tax: £222,000
EPS: 2.07p (19.9p)
Div: 2p (4.25p)

WELLMAN (Int)
Pre-tax: £1.17m
EPS: 2.6p (1.6p)
Div: 0.8p (0.75p)

MURRAY ENTERPRISE
Pre-tax: Loss £8,327
LPS: 0.18p (EPS: 1.11p)

SECURITY ARCHIVES (Int)
Pre-tax: £575,000
EPS: 6.7p (5.7p)

JAMES CROSBY (Int)
Pre-tax: £315,000
EPS: 4.9p (13.4p)

WIGGINS GROUP (Int)
Pre-tax: Loss £389,000
LPS: 5.6p (5.2p)

GIBSON LYONS (Int)
Pre-tax: £729,000
EPS: 6.0p (6.5p)

TOWLES (Int)
Pre-tax: Loss £895,000
LPS: 17.3p (20.2p)

Total dividend last year was 8p. Turnover eased to £8.73m (£7.49m). Net interest received was £804,000 (£404,000).

Last time's profit was £2.33m. Turnover fell to £9.46m (£14.4m). Trading shows no sign of early improvement. Gearing is about 15%.

Turnover fell to £90.8m (£94.9m). Interests costs rose to £2.37m (£1.92m). All group's sections saw a decline in demand.

Board believes that the group is well positioned for continued growth in each of its specialist business sectors.

Figures in Irish currency. The CLF Holdings subsidiary made trading losses of Ir£200,000. Gross income increased to Ir£78.4m (Ir£59.1m).

Last time's profit was £793,000. Turnover grew to £14.9m (£8.78m). Group had good summer volumes of freight and flowers from Guernsey.

Last time's profit was £1.58m. While board believes it has taken right steps, it remains apprehensive about the state of trade.

Last time's profit was £880,000. Fully-diluted earnings stood at 2.2p (1.6p). Turnover increased to £15.1m (£14.2m).

Final results. Pre-tax profit for previous 14 months was £421,000. No dividend.

Last time's profit was £437,000. Turnover grew by 36 per cent to £3.2m. Interim dividend 3p (2.5p).

Last time's profit was £2.25m. Turnover £10.2m (£8.6m). Interim dividend cut to 0.75p (1.25p).

Last time's pre-tax loss was £866,000. Turnover fell to £8.92m (£10.8m). No dividend.

Last time's profit was £702,000. Turnover climbed to £11.5m (£11m). Interim dividend 2.0p (1.9p).

Last time's pre-tax loss was £222,000. Turnover slipped to £8.3m (£5.7m). No dividend.

DOUGLAS

Strong performance in difficult trading conditions

Summary of Half Year Results

To 30th September (unaudited)	1990	1989
Turnover	£186m	£161m
Pre-tax profit	£5.34m	£5.20m
Profit attributable to members	£3.13m	£3.15m
Earnings per share	20.7p	20.6p
Dividends per share	3.0p	3.0p

"The Group has performed very well in difficult market conditions. The figures underline the success of our strategy of well balanced activity, geographic spread, management depth and stringent financial control. We are in a strong position to meet the challenges of a hostile economic environment."

John Douglas OBE, Chairman
Robert M. Douglas Holdings PLC

CONSTRUCTION • HOUSING & PROPERTY DEVELOPMENT
CONSTRUCTION EQUIPMENT & PLANT
PROPERTY INVESTMENT & SPECIALIST CONTRACTING

مركز من الاصل

Digging deep in Lime Street

COMMENT

DAVID BREWERTON

Suffering names at Lloyd's, with run-off years of account still not reinsured, are being thrown a lifeline, but the price of picking it up may be so high as to leave many of them with little alternative other than to drown.

Lloyd's plan to set up its own reinsurance company to underwrite the liabilities of the run-off years of account gives the first impression that Lloyd's is weighing in with real help for those who were unlucky enough to join syndicates which became entangled with business carrying the long and lethal tail of asbestos claims. What is proposed is a highly expensive option: it will give the names no real benefits except that of certainty. They will be able to exchange the unknown future liability for a set, one-off, premium.

The snag is that the premium will be no lower than the amount estimated to be necessary to discharge all the future liabilities. Few of the syndicates currently in trouble with run-off years have that amount of reserve in hand, so in exchange for certainty, the names will have to dip their hands in their pockets sooner

rather than later. Some, undoubtedly, will consider almost any price a reasonable amount to pay to walk away from the open-ended commitment. Others will be in no better shape to pay the reinsurance premium than to meet the claims as they fall due.

There was a certain anxiety to present the plan as the many coming to the aid of the few in a way which will not involve the many digging into their pockets. The history of the troubled syndicates, however, is that the extent of future claims has been consistently under-estimated and if the run-off reinsurance premiums prove inadequate, then the central fund will have to make good. Lloyd's has already started to crank up the size of the central fund to one billion pounds. If history is any guide, every penny will be needed.

One small consolation for the names is that the premium payable will be deducted for tax purposes and any resultant loss

will be allowable. So the good old taxpayer will effectively pick up part of the tab for the excesses, greed and lack of judgment of some Lloyd's syndicates.

Hanson high

Lord Hanson and his partner Sir Gordon White have few equals when it comes to reading the rises and falls of business cycles. They are about to reap a rich harvest as a result.

In the past couple of years, when captains of industry tended to measure their virility by the pile of takeover scalps they won, Hanson and White mostly kept their powder dry. Not for them the fancy prices made possible by

clever but dangerous financial engineering devised by fee-hungry corporate financiers. Instead, they made a string of medium-sized disposals at what now look like exorbitant ratings and pounced instead on opportunities too good to miss, such as ConsGold and Peabody.

With £6.9 billion in the bank, a strong balance sheet and the power to borrow up to £16 billion, Hanson could in theory set its sights on an acquisition of, say, £15 billion. The next 12 months are likely to bring opportunities galore, and when Hanson makes its move, probably in America, there will be no white knight riding to the rescue on joint debt.

The punk for shareholders to

grasp is a simple one. Hanson's earnings will rise sharply by the end of 1992 without acquisitions. With a well-timed bid, they could fly.

Sagging floor

It could soon be another day for the diary for ERM trivia buffs. With the pound trading down to DM2.8850 against the background of crashing oil prices, a breach of DM2.88 is in sight. This level was the "effective floor" for sterling set by the high-flying peseta when Britain joined the ERM on October 8. But this has since moved down in almost perfect synchronisation with sterling.

When sterling entered the ERM at DM2.95, the effective floor was DM2.88. Today, with the pound just below DM2.89, official calculations tell us that the "effective floor" is down to DM2.82. In other words, the

immediate downside risk for sterling is exactly the same now as it was then — seven pence. It seems that the peseta provides a rather special kind of floor for sterling. It ensures that sterling's ride downwards is reasonably smooth and comfortable, but it does nothing to prevent the movement down.

All this must be something of an embarrassment to the many analysts who argued two months ago that seven pence would be the maximum downside risk for sterling in the ERM. If the pound breaks decisively through DM2.88, more speculative pressure is to be expected as the disillusioned sterling bulls finally give up. The authorities seem unworried. They know that the only ERM floor that matters is the one against the mark at DM2.780. For some of the monetary masochists at Threadneedle Street, the weakness of sterling may even be welcome if it limits the scope for an early cut in interest rates. But what if the Chancellor cuts rates anyway next Friday? That's when the testing of the ERM will really start.

TEMPUS

GrandMet resilience yet to be appreciated



From bad to worse: Hitchens of YJ Lovell

GRAND Metropolitan may have outperformed the market by about 20 per cent over the past year, but it has not been a smooth ride. The interim result in May was marred by an outbreak of "mad cow" disease, which sent the shares into a spin, while the apparently endless wrangling with the trade department over the Courage deal was a feature of the summer.

By autumn, the company was suffering profit mark-downs on the back of its high exposure to the dollar. The shares, therefore, have veered wildly from about \$20 to almost \$80 in the past 12 months. A sparkling set of full-year figures yesterday sent them 17p higher to 629p.

Pre-tax profits rose from £732 million to £919 million, the top end of analysts' forecasts, and although Sir Allen Sheppard, the chairman, admits the group is not immune from recession, there are still further benefits to squeeze out of the 1988 acquisition of Pillsbury in America.

GrandMet boasted of organic growth of 17 per cent from its drinks business, 12.5 per cent from retail and 21 per cent from food, excluding the Alpo pet food concern, which was withdrawn from sale.

The market believes that brewing, in the widest sense, is one of the most recession-proof sectors, gloomy comments from Bass on Wednesday notwithstanding. GrandMet can point to gearing halved to 84 per cent from the level seen after the Pillsbury takeover, while the eventual resolution of the Courage issue, and probable cash inflows of about £500 million, will bring gearing down another 20 percentage points.

Despite lower property earnings and weakness in the dollar, pre-tax profits should be in the £1 billion range this year. The shares, therefore, sell on about the sector average of ten times' future earnings. They deserve better.

Pilkington

PILKINGTON'S European and American flat and safety glass business held up remarkably well in the six months to end-September, mainly because the biggest operations

are in booming Germany rather than in Britain. Since the 7 per cent shortfall in these core operations was fully covered by lower interest charges, Pilkington might have been sticking its corporate chest out with pride. Instead, pre-tax profits fell 30 per cent to £103 million and the group could again have to look over its shoulder for an aggressive bidder.

The main short-term damage was from glass operations in Brazil, Argentina and Australasia, where market

conditions were disastrous. Far more damaging to the corporate image is the failure of the anti-cyclical diversification strategy. Pilkington's combined operating profits less losses from eyecare, insulation, military optical and other high tech businesses fell from an inadequate £15 million to £6 million on £290 million sales.

The expensively bought Visioncare companies recovered after the American contact lens scare to £12.2 million. But they should be

making over £50 million a year and are saleable.

The immediate defence is to maintain the full-year dividend of 10.5p per share. With American and British glass profits under more pressure, full-year profits may be only £200 million. That would leave the shares at 158p, 12 times prospective earnings of about 13p with a yield of 8.9 per cent. Recovery could be dramatic, but will take some time.

YJ Lovell

FOR the property and construction group YJ Lovell, 1990 has been a disaster.

It started badly with the unsuccessful and ruinously expensive bid for Higgs & Hill, and then became worse. Serious problems in its urban renewal division coincided with a general slump in housebuilding and commercial development. The full scale of the damage is now clear.

Pre-tax profits of £19.9 million for the year to end-September are 31 per cent below restated figures for 1989 and 40 per cent below the unadjusted figures announced in the middle of the £167 million bid for Higgs & Hill. The damage continues below the line, where extraordinary items of £11.4 million reduce the attributable profit to £3 million. Paying an unchanged dividend of 6.75p to give a total of 8.95p (8.75p) required a £2.2 million transfer from reserves.

The retreat by Lovell, whose chairman is Antony Hitchens, from the company's high profile but now out of fashion urban renewal business, is proving even more expensive than originally thought.

The only real bright spot was construction, where pre-tax and pre-exceptional profits more than doubled to £11.8 million. But construction will be hard pressed to do as well again.

Despite the uncertain outlook there could still be a modest rise in profits in the current year to say £21 million. At 140p, the shares are on a p/e of 6 and could reward anyone who believes the house market will recover in 1991.

Electricity grey market edges higher

PRICES in the unofficial "grey market" for electricity shares edged higher yesterday, with Northern, the most highly priced of the 12 distributors, at 140p as the number of applications processed crossed four million.

The total is likely to be well above six million. Although under the clawback arrangements the public will now receive 55 per cent of the issue, scaling-back is inevitable, quite possibly for all applicants except those who applied for the £100 minimum investment in their own bond.

The grey market run by IG Index, the financial book-maker, showed an average price when dealings start next Tuesday of 136p.

But analysts covering the float were advising retail investors not to count their profits too soon. If the 12 share prices go to the indicated premium, the companies in yield terms will look less attractive than water shares, where the package is yielding about 7.2 per cent.

MARTIN WALLER

Loss on bank and building society cards should be £50

LOSSES on all bank and building society cards will be limited to £50 under a draft code of practice, which should come into operation by the middle of next year.

Customers will still be liable if they are negligent or fraudulent.

The proposed voluntary code of banking practice has been drawn up by a working group comprising representatives of the British Bankers' Association, the Building Societies Association and the Association for Payment and Clearing Services. This follows a recommendation by the Jack Committee review of banking services last year and a white paper in the spring of this year.

Credit cards are already limited to maximum losses for customers of £50 under the Consumer Credit Act. Most companies do not hold customers responsible for any of the loss unless they have been negligent or personally involved in a fraud.

National Westminster and

Lloyds say they already limit losses to customers on all cards. Barclays said it was looking at the possibility of introducing the £50 limit to all cards ahead of the implementation of the code.

For the first time, customers will be able to refuse a personal identification number with their cards so that they cannot be used in cash dispensers.

The code also seeks views on whether customers should have the right to choose their own numbers.

The code will also require lenders to take particular care when marketing credit to young people aged 18 to 21. Banks and building societies will also have to publish all their charges.

Sir George Blunden, who chaired the steering committee overseeing the drawing up of the code, said: "The fact that a code of practice has been produced does not mean that we have a poor banking system in the United Kingdom. It is the opposite which

is the case, and the code, for the most part, reproduces what is currently the best practice on the part of the leading institutions. Accordingly, it is not expected that the code will lead to a major upheaval in the way that banks, building societies and card issuers behave."

Guy Dehn, the legal officer of the National Consumer Council, said that it wanted negligence relating to losses on bank cards to be detailed in the code so that bank customers knew when they might be liable for large losses.

The council also wanted customers to be given notice before banks and building societies levied charges on accounts. This could avoid a customer being pushed into the red by the charges.

Comments on the code should be sent by March 1 to Code of Banking Practice, 10 Lombard Street, London EC3V 9AP.

LINDSAY COOK
Money Editor

THE TIMES CITY DIARY

One stop for James Capel

AS REDUNDANCY speculation sweeps the City, James Capel has confirmed that it has laid off seven employees from its Australian and mining desks in London. Those shown the door were two mining salesmen, two mining dealers, one dealer from the Australian desk and two secretaries. "A few years ago we established a separate company in Australia and also bought into an existing broking firm in Canada. Both those firms had their own sales desks in London, which meant that there was some duplication of services," explains Rob Weinberg, head of Capel's international mining department. "We are thus amalgamating the Australian desk in London with the international mining department and in due course we would like to do the same thing with the Canadian desk." Weinberg says that the changes are a reorganising exercise and, to prove his point, adds that he is in the process of recruiting a mining analyst — "I can't tell you who he is because he hasn't resigned yet" — and five specialist mining sales traders from RND International, a small South African broker based in London. They are John Daniels, Tom Walford, Alastair White, Andy McDougal and Rob Leith. "In a sense we are returning to our roots," says Weinberg, "providing a one-stop colonial department."

AN ARTICLE about South West Water in the Cornish Guardian reads: "In the summer representatives of the parish councils had called at the South West Water information stand seeking answers to a variety of questions. The official they spoke to had tried to be helpful but appeared out of his depth."

Firm watcher

AT LAST one of the big broking firms seems to be turning its attention to the hitherto neglected smaller companies sector of the stock market. UBS Phillips & Drew is bolstering its smaller companies team with the recruitment of Andrew Richmond, a specialist analyst from Flemings Asset Management. Richmond, aged 24, due to start on Monday, has been with Flemings for more than two years. "It has been a very difficult time for smaller companies," he admits. "But things will

improve. Over the next couple of years I think UBS P & D will put a lot of effort into this area so that when there is an upturn in the performance of smaller companies it will be well placed."

All square

WHILE many brokers and bankers in the square mile are counting themselves lucky simply to have jobs this Christmas, staff at Lazards, the merchant bank, have suddenly lost their festive cheer after hearing about their annual pay increases. Compared with a flat rate increase of 14 per cent last year — which meant a rise of £5,600 for someone on a salary of £40,000 — this year's pay rise is to be £1,000, for everyone from the messenger boys to the senior executives.

IF YOU complain about the number of Christmas cards you send, spare a thought for the Queen. People live so long that she now has to send 1,700 100th birthday greetings, compared with 200 in 1952.

Merry go round

WHEN John Woolfenden's wife and children arrive in London from their Wigan home for a family theatre trip and celebration in honour of his 50th birthday this evening they could find him somewhat the worse for wear. For popular and jovial Woolfenden, group compliance officer at UBS Phillips & Drew, will

private luncheon party with some of his closest City friends at the Connaught Hotel, but also a surprise champagne breakfast being thrown by his compliance colleagues within the Broadgate headquarters of UBS P & D. "I will not fall asleep during the theatre," Woolfenden insisted yesterday, still in ignorance of the boozey breakfast that lay before him.

Geordie toast

SIR Michael Straker, aged 62, a straight-backed old Etonian who once served in the Coldstream Guards, is more understanding than most about the homesickness soldiers in the Gulf will experience this Christmas. Since they will not be able to drown their sorrows in alcohol, he is making use of his position as chairman of Northumbrian Water to ease their plight. Some 12,000 bottles of Northumbrian Water have been loaded into two 20 ft containers and are on their way to the troubled region by sea, a journey expected to take three weeks. The containers are intended for the 700 or so Royal Scots Dragoon Guards there, a sizeable percentage of whom are Geordies. "It will give them a taste of home," says a spokesman, "and give them something with which to toast their families at Christmas." It should also ease the sizeable Ministry of Defence water bill.

Tiphook plc

STRONG GROWTH CONTINUES

Turnover up 75% to £130.8m

Pre-tax profits up 150% to £25.2m

Interim dividend up 30% to 3.5p

INTERIM RESULTS

FOR THE HALF YEAR ENDED 31ST OCTOBER 1990

Unaudited	1990	1989	Increase
Turnover	£130.8	£74.8	75%
Profit on ordinary activities before taxation	£25.2	£10.1	150%
Profit on ordinary activities after taxation	£23.8	£10.1	136%
Interim dividend per ordinary share — net	3.5p	2.7p	30%
Earnings per ordinary share	21.9p	17.5p	25%

"These encouraging results combine organic growth and margin increases as well as benefits from recent acquisitions.

The container, trailer and rail wagon businesses are excellently placed for future growth in their expanding markets.

I look forward to reporting the full year results."

Robert J. Montague, Executive Chairman.

Tiphook plc, Lancaster House, 7 Elmfield Road, Bromley, Kent, United Kingdom. Telephone: 081-460 6060.

STOCK MARKET

Shares near 2,200 level as dealers await start of trading in electricity

EVENTS in the Middle East continued to dominate the equity market with the reports that Iraq planned to release all foreign hostages driving share prices sharply higher. But trading conditions remained thin. Turnover rose to 356 million shares but this was inflated by several programme trades and a high level of bed-and-breakfast deals to establish tax losses.

Dealers said that fund managers were reluctant to be drawn in by the growing prospect of a peaceful settlement in the Middle East. They were waiting for the start of trading in the shares of the electricity companies next week. Judging by the price movements in the grey market, there should be some big premiums on the first day.

The FT-SE 100 index came within 10 points of the 2,200 level before boing over as a firm start on Wall Street petered out. The index finished 24.9 up at 2,177.5. The FT index of 30 shares added 28.3 at 1,717.9. Sentiment was also helped by the news of the European concession in the Gatt talks. There was little reaction to the gloomy distributive trades' survey from the CBI.

Government securities achieved gains of almost 1% at the longer end with hopes for an early cut in interest rates revived. Lower fuel bills

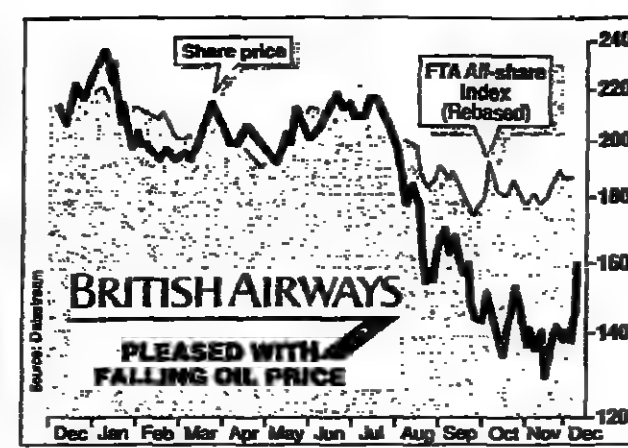
should help to reduce inflation. But oil shares took a pounding as the price for January Brent slid to \$25.45 after the easing of tension in the Middle East and the offer from Iraq.

BP fell 9p to 330p, Enterprise 22p to 612p, Lasso 22p to 391p, Premier Consolidated 45p to 624p, Shell 5p to 452p, and Ultramar 5p to 332p. Only *Burmah Castrol*, currently fighting for control of Foseco, was able to buck the trend with a rise of 21p to 506p. Its extensive downstream activities may benefit from a lower oil price.

The falling price of oil should also be good news for British Airways, up 11p at 159p. BA issued a warning last month that rising fuel costs meant it was unlikely to make any profits in the second half of its current year.

The full-year figures from Grand Metropolitan, the international brewing and food group, were at the top end of expectations, lifting the shares 18p to 630p. Pre-tax profits were up from £732 million to £919 million with earnings a share climbing from 17.6p to 20.4p.

Sir Allen Sheppard, the chairman, expects further growth in earnings next year. But he gave a warning that the impact of the weak dollar on American earnings, fewer property disposals and an



increased tax charge could make things difficult. Final figures from Hanson, the industrial conglomerate, were at the bottom end of expectations but the shares still rose 34p to 199p. Pre-tax profits were 20 per cent ahead at £1.28 billion. The group's British operations contributed £579 million, although Amey Roadstone and London Brick were both affected by the recession.

The interim figures from Pilkington, Britain's biggest glass manufacturer, made

trading on more cost reductions, the sale of surplus assets and the rationalisation of manufacturing capacity. The profits setback had been expected, so the price ended 6p better at 161p.

Tiphook, the containers and trailer rental group, rose 4p to 369p after reporting first-half

pre-tax profits more than doubled to £25.2 million. The figures were in line with expectations and analysts have pencilled in at least £75 million for the full year.

Brent Walker, the debt-laden leisure group, fell 4p to 74p on the departure of Wilfred Aquilina, the finance director. The news was not entirely unexpected. Last week, the group finally managed to get its £103 million convertible bond underwritten.

Reuters, the international news agency and financial information group, jumped 32p to 648p in further response to this week's presentation for analysts in New York at which the group made a profits forecast.

The Baxi paper and building products group recovered some of its 1p to 69p. The shares were knocked by claims this week that the outlook for next year was grim. An anonymous document was sent by fax to a number of analysts. The company said the fax was false and it has asked the Stock Exchange to investigate.

The Wickes do-it-yourself and building products group rallied 1p to 60p after Wednesday's sharp fall.

MICHAEL CLARK

C&W to set up £200m Polish deal

By OUR CITY STAFF

CABLE and Wireless, the telecommunications group, has signed a memorandum of understanding with the Polish ministry of posts to set up a telecommunications network in the Gdansk region. The plan will involve investments of more than £200 million over a seven- to ten-year period.

In exchange, Cable and Wireless will be granted a 25-year licence to operate and manage the network in co-operation with the Polish regional and national operators.

The new network will provide modern digital international and domestic services. Within six to ten years, an integrated digital network will be completed and serve at least 450,000 customers. Work is expected to start soon.

Weak dollar may force Airbus to leave Europe, says Daimler

By ROSS TIEMAN, INDUSTRIAL CORRESPONDENT

AIRBUS Industrie may shift much of its manufacturing outside Europe to combat financial losses threatened by weakness of the dollar, Gerhard Liener, finance director of Daimler-Benz, said yesterday.

Herr Liener said work could be sub-contracted to countries with dollar-linked currencies in central and south America, or to Indonesia. "That is one option."

Daimler acquired control of a 37.9 per cent stake in Airbus when it bought Messerschmitt-Bölkow-Blohm out of state control last year.

Because aircraft sales worldwide are priced in dollars, the German Federal government undertook to protect Daimler against fluctuations in the

mark/dollar rate between DM1.60 and DM2.

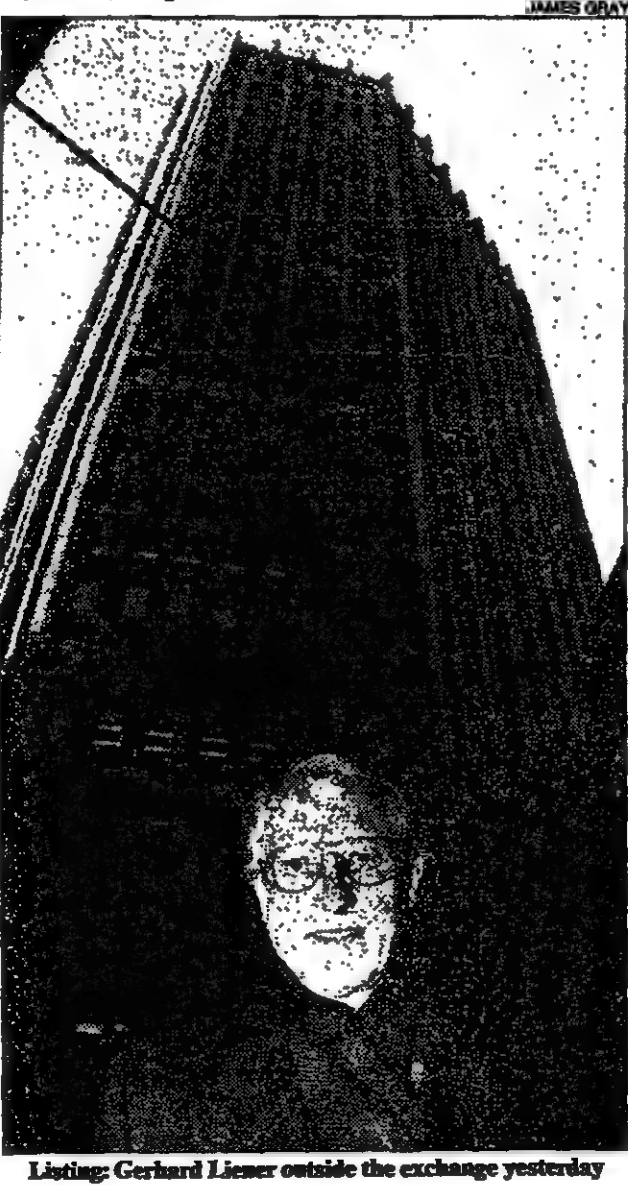
Herr Liener said Daimler now faced huge technical losses at the year end because the dollar has since softened to DM1.49. Daimler is obliged by German accounting rules to provide against currency losses on its share of the entire Airbus order book. Negotiations with Daimler's auditors about a less draconian treatment continue.

The volatility of exchange rates has spurred continental partners in the Airbus consortium to follow the lead of British Aerospace, which has a 20 per cent stake. BAe has shifted half of its civil aircraft work into dollar contracts, largely by sub-contracting.

Airbus, constituted as a partnership between Daimler, BAe, Aerospatiale of France and CASA of Spain, is now one of Europe's largest businesses. Herr Liener said he hoped it could be incorporated under French law by the end of 1991, raising the possibility that shares could be offered to the public.

Herr Liener was speaking as Daimler gained a listing on the International Stock Exchange in London via an introduction by Deutsche Bank and Morgan Grenfell.

The Daimler finance director quashed expectations that Helmut Haussmann, who resigned as Germany's economic minister on Monday might join the company. "Herr Haussmann must find his own job," he said.



Listing: Gerhard Liener outside the exchange yesterday

Thames Power agrees £500m station site

THAMES Power has reached agreement with the London Borough of Barking and Dagenham on a new site for its proposed £500 million, 1,000 megawatt power station alongside the lower reaches of the River Thames (Ross Tieman writes).

The deal clears the way for the first gas-fired power station in the Southeast, where

demand, and potential rewards, are highest. Thames Power is 45 per cent owned by BICC, the cables and construction group. Its partners are CU Power, part of the Canadian group ATCO, with 45 per cent, and J. Henry Schroder Wagg, the merchant bank, which has 10 per cent.

The high-efficiency combined cycle gas turbine station

was originally to have been built on a redundant Central Electricity Generating Board site at Barking Reach, Essex.

The London borough and Thames Power have instead taken joint options over a site alongside Ford's Dagenham car plant. The options last until July, and should enable Thames Power to obtain necessary consents from the en-

ergy and environment departments.

The power station is expected to begin generating in 1994. BICC's Balfour Beatty construction arm is likely to be the main contractor.

Thames Power said employment during construction was expected to peak at 500. The plant would employ 100 people once completed.

WORLD MARKETS

Profit-taking cuts Dow rise

New York

SHARES were strong at mid-morning, but blue chips were lower as some investors took quick profits. The Dow Jones industrial average was up 24 points to 2,634.40 after rising by 36 points.

Optimism for peace in the Gulf was high after Iraq's offer to release all foreign hostages. The news helped shares but sent crude oil prices lower.

● Hong Kong - Prices ended

at their highest since August 16, in a confident market buoyed by renewed hopes for a peaceful settlement. The Hang Seng index surged 60.56 to 3,126.79, while the Hong Kong index jumped 39.26 to 2,050.15.

● Frankfurt - Shares rocketed late on Thursday after President Hussein said he would release hostages. The Dax index closed at 1,504.67, up 33.71 points, or 2.3 per

cent, from Wednesday's close. ● Singapore - The market closed on a firm note with prices rising sharply across the board in active trading. The Straits Times industrial index jumped 28.74 to 1,152.96.

● Sydney - Shares ended marginally firmer despite news of the completion of the Westpac Banking share sale. The All-Ordinaries index closed 1.3 firmer at 1,323.3. (Reuters)

Weaker oil lifts Nikkei 359 points

Tokyo

PRICES closed higher because of hopes for a quick, peaceful settlement in the Middle East. Benedict Jevy, the manager of international sales at Credit Lyonnais Securities (Japan), said: "The market opened higher on the back of weaker oil prices."

Turnover was relatively moderate. There was buying in insurance and pharmaceutical issues.

The Nikkei average closed 359.38 points, or 1.62 per cent, up at 22,553.10. The turnover of 350 million shares compared with 350 million on Wednesday.

The market opened to the news that Iraq had accepted President Bush's proposal for talks on the Gulf, which triggered overnight gains on Wall Street and sent oil prices in New York to their lowest in two months. (Reuters)

Scapa dips below £20m at half time

By MARTIN BARROW

A WEAKER dollar affected first-half earnings at Scapa Group, which makes products for the paper and printing industries and has substantial interests in North America.

Pre-tax profits fell from £20.07 million to £19.84 million in the six months to end-September, with unfavourable currency movements reducing profitability by about £1 million. Earnings were unchanged at 7.1p a share while the interim dividend rises from 1.43p a share to 1.5p.

Group turnover advanced 5 per cent to £141.57 million, with British operations gaining £5.2 million to £56.68 million after the acquisition of Tuff Rubber, of Gwent, for £10.5 million at the beginning of the financial year. In North America, sales to £52.38 million (£53.05 million), with other countries contributing £32.51 million (£30.4 million).

At the operating level, profits fell from £23.18 million to £22.66 million. While Britain's contribution rose from £5.33 million to £6.10 million, North America's fell from £13.89 million to £13.03 million and that of other countries from just under £4 million to £3.55 million. Net interest charges were cut from £3.11 million to £2.85 million.

Bill Goodall, the chairman of Scapa, gave a warning that significant gains in profitability were not expected until the end of next year, despite "excellent" performances by parts of the business.

WALL STREET

Dec 6	Dec 5	Dec 6	Dec 5	Dec 6	Dec 5
Index	Index	Index	Index	Index	Index
Advan. Ind.	44.4%	44.1%	Enron	57.7%	56.9%
Auto Ind.	44.1%	43.8%	GenCorp	22.2%	22.1%
Chem. Ind.	44.1%	43.8%	IBM	24.1%	24.0%
Comp. Ind.	44.1%	43.8%	Intel	24.1%	24.0%
Elect. Ind.	44.1%	43.8%	Johnson & Johnson	24.1%	24.0%
Food Ind.	44.1%	43.8%	McDonald's	24.1%	24.0%
Health Care	44.1%	43.8%	Merck	24.1%	24.0%
Ind. Gas	44.1%	43.8%	Microsoft	24.1%	24.0%
Int'l. Ind.	44.1%	43.8%	Oracle	24.1%	24.0%
Life Sci.	44.1%	43.8%	PepsiCo	24.1%	24.0%
Media	44.1%	43.8%	Procter & Gamble	24.1%	24.0%
Metals	44.1%	43.8%	Reynolds	24.1%	24.0%
Oil & Gas	44.1%	43.8%	Schlumberger	24.1%	24.0%
Pharm.	44.1%	43.8%	Union Carbide	24.1%	24.0%
Real Estate	44.1%	43.8%	Wendy's	24.1%	24.0%
Services	44.1%	43.8%	Wendy's	24.1%	24.0%
Textiles	44.1%	43.8%	Wendy's	24.1%	24.0%
Transport	44.1%	43.8%	Wendy's	24.1%	24.0%
Utilities	44.1%	43.8%	Wendy's	24.1%	24.0%
W. Ind.	44.1%	43.8%	Wendy's	24.1%	24.0%
Yield	44.1%	43.8%	Wendy's	24.1%	24.0%

WORLD MARKET INDICES

Index	Value	Daily chg	Yearly chg	Daily chg	Yearly chg
The World	579.4	1.9	-31.3	1.8	-22.5
(free)	110.7	1.8	-31.3	1.7	-22.5
EAFF	992.7	2.6	-36.9	1.9	-31.0
(free)	102.0	2.6	-36.4	1.8	-31.2
Europe	623.8	1.9	-17.0	1.8	-15.3
(free)	135.0	1.9	-17.4	1.5	-15.0
Nth America	423.7	0.6	-21.2	1.1	-5.3
Nordic	1141.1	2.0	-26.7	1.9	-21.4
(free)	167.7	2.0	-26.2	2.0	-14.9
Pacific	2120.5	3.3	-46.5	2.0	-40.8
Far East	3068.1	3.4	-47.0	2.0	-41.4
Australia	235.6	-0.1	-22.3	-0.3	-16.3
Austria	1375.3	1.8	-7.5	1.6	-2.0
Belgium	719.9	0.6	-26.9	0.4	-23.8
Canada	423.3	0.8	-29.5	1.1	-14.9
Denmark	1101.9	1.4	-16.3	1.4	-12.3
Finland	68.4	0.1	-40.7	0.0	-36.9
(free)	92.9	0.1	-37.6	0.0	-33.8
France	634.7	1.9	-21.5	1.9	-17.5
Germany	742.5	2.8	-19.1	2.0	-14.4
Hong Kong	1992.1	1.3	-10.2	1.7	8.0
Italy	272.8	4.7	-29.2	4.7	-24.7
Japan	3210.6	3.5	-48.0	2.1	-42.6
Netherlands	738.0	0.1	-21.9	0.0	-17.3
New Zealand	54.4	-3.6	-47.3	-1.9	-37.1
Norway	1173.1	0.2	-12.6	0.1	-7.0
(free)	204.3	-0.5	-12.6	-0.6	-7.0
Sing/Malay	1437.1	1.8	-28.0	2.2	-21.7
Spain	172.8	0.2	-27.0	0.0	-23.7
Sweden	1205.7	3.3	-31.3	3.2	-25.3
(free)	749.0	4.4	-28.4	4.2	-19.7
Switzerland	742.8	3.5	-18.8	3.2	-19.5
(free)	113.3	3.7	-18.8	3.3	-19.5
UK	652.0	1.4	-9.6	1.4	-9.6
USA	384.1	0.6	-20.5	1.1	-4.4

(per Local currency. Source: Morgan Stanley Capital International)

LONDON TRADED OPTIONS

Index	Value	Daily chg	Yearly chg	Daily chg	Yearly chg
Advan. Ind.	44.4%	44.1%	Enron	57.7%	56.9%
Auto Ind.	44.1%	43.8%	GenCorp	22.2%	22.1%
Chem. Ind.	44.1%	43.8%	IBM	24.1%	24.0%
Comp. Ind.	44.1%	43.8%	Intel	24.1%	24.0%
Elect. Ind.	44.1%	43.8%	Johnson & Johnson	24.1%	24.0%
Food Ind.	44.1%	43.8%	McDonald's	24.1%	24.0%
Health Care	44.1%	43.8%	Merck	24.1%	24.0%
Ind. Gas	44.1%	43.8%	Microsoft	24.1%	24.0%
Int'l. Ind.	44.1%	43.8%	Oracle	24.1%	24.0%
Life Sci.	44.1%	43.8%	PepsiCo	24.1%	24.0%
Media	44.1%	43.8%	Procter & Gamble	24.1%	24.0%
Metals	44.1%	43.8%	Reynolds	24.1%	24.0%
Oil & Gas	44.1%	43.8%	Schlumberger	24.1%	24.0%
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W. Ind.	44.1%	43.8%	Wendy's	24.1%	24.0%
Yield	44.1%	43.8%	Wendy's	24.1%	24.0%

MAJOR CHANGES

Index	Value	Daily chg	Yearly chg	Daily chg	Yearly chg
Advan. Ind.	44.4%	44.1%	Enron	57.7%	56.9%
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FOREIGN EXCHANGES

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Portfolio
PLATINUM

From your Portfolio Platinum card check your eight share price movements on this page only. Add them up to give you your daily dividend figure. If it matches the prize money stated, if you win, follow the claim procedure on the back of your card. Always have your card available when claiming. Game rules appear on the back of your card.

No.	Company	Group	Code or Index
1	Allwoods	Building/Roads	
2	Norcor	Building/Roads	
3	Concor	Building/Roads	
4	BPP Ind (as)	Building/Roads	
5	Courts	Building/Roads	
6	Tomkins	Building/Roads	
7	Tesco (as)	Food	
8	Quelch	Food	
9	Salvesen (Chas)	Food	
10	Read Int (as)	Food	
11	IMI (as)	Food	
12	RHM (as)	Food	
13	Low Group	Food	
14	CIA Co	Food	
15	Brake Bros	Food	
16	MB - Carndon (as)	Food	
17	Whitbread A (as)	Breweries	
18	Caledonia	Transport	
19	Williams Hodge (as)	Transport	
20	Yale & Valer	Transport	
21	North West	Transport	
22	Frogmore	Property	
23	Woodfoot Alexander	Property	
24	Water	Property	
25	Yorkshire Water	Property	
26	Shephard Exhib	Property	
27	MEPC (as)	Property	
28	Vickers	Industrial S-Z	
29	T & N (as)	Industrial S-Z	
30	Barrett (H)	Industrial S-Z	
31	Laird	Industrial S-Z	
32	Redland (as)	Industrial S-Z	
33	Pittsington (as)	Industrial S-Z	
34	Br Aerospace (as)	Industrial S-Z	
35	BICC (as)	Industrial S-Z	
36	Spirax-Sarco	Industrial S-Z	
37	Rattars Group	Industrial S-Z	
38	First Leisure	Leisure	
39	Spayhawk	Leisure	
40	Sainsbury J (as)	Leisure	
41	Anglian Water	Leisure	
42	Trustee Pl (as)	Leisure	
43	Thames (as)	Leisure	
44	Meyer Int	Leisure	

Please take into account any minus signs

Weekly Dividend						
Please make a note of your daily totals for the weekly dividend of £4,000 in tomorrow's newspaper.						
MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT	SUN

Denis Ward, of Epsom, Surrey, won yesterday's £2,000 Portfolio Platinum prize.

BRITISH FUNDS

High Low Company Price Change % P/E

SHORTS (Under Five Years)

5% 10% 15% 20% 25% 30% 35% 40% 45% 50% 55% 60% 65% 70% 75% 80% 85% 90% 95% 100%

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STOCK EXCHANGE PRICES

Good gains

ACCOUNT DAYS: Dealings began November 19. Dealings end today. Contango day December 10. Settlement day December 17.

Forward bargains are permitted on two previous business days.

Prices recorded are at market close. Changes are calculated on the previous day's close, but adjustments are made when a stock is ex-dividend. Where one price is quoted, it is a middle price. Changes, yields and price/earnings ratios are based on middle prices. (as) denotes Alpha Stocks. (VOLUMES: PAGE 29).

1990	High	Low	Company	Price	Change	%	P/E
478	478	478	1st Nat	10.00	0.00	0.0	10.0
478	478	478	2nd Nat	10.00	0.00	0.0	10.0
478	478	478	3rd Nat	10.00	0.00	0.0	10.0
478	478	478	4th Nat	10.00	0.00	0.0	10.0
478	478	478	5th Nat	10.00	0.00	0.0	10.0
478	478	478	6th Nat	10.00	0.00	0.0	10.0
478	478	478	7th Nat	10.00	0.00	0.0	10.0
478	478	478	8th Nat	10.00	0.00	0.0	10.0
478	478	478	9th Nat	10.00	0.00	0.0	10.0
478	478	478	10th Nat	10.00	0.00	0.0	10.0

1990	High	Low	Company	Price	Change	%	P/E
478	478	478	11th Nat	10.00	0.00	0.0	10.0
478	478	478	12th Nat	10.00	0.00	0.0	10.0
478	478	478	13th Nat	10.00	0.00	0.0	10.0
478	478	478	14th Nat	10.00	0.00	0.0	10.0
478	478	478	15th Nat	10.00	0.00	0.0	10.0
478	478	478	16th Nat	10.00	0.00	0.0	10.0
478	478	478	17th Nat	10.00	0.00	0.0	10.0
478	478	478	18th Nat	10.00	0.00	0.0	10.0
478	478	478	19th Nat	10.00	0.00	0.0	10.0
478	478	478	20th Nat	10.00	0.00	0.0	10.0

1990	High	Low	Company	Price	Change	%	P/E
478	478	478	21st Nat	10.00	0.00	0.0	10.0
478	478	478	22nd Nat	10.00	0.00	0.0	10.0
478	478	478	23rd Nat	10.00	0.00	0.0	10.0
478	478	478	24th Nat	10.00	0.00	0.0	10.0
478	478	478	25th Nat	10.00	0.00	0.0	10.0
478	478	478	26th Nat	10.00	0.00	0.0	10.0
478	478	478	27th Nat	10.00	0.00	0.0	10.0
478	478	478	28th Nat	10.00	0.00	0.0	10.0
478	478	478	29th Nat	10.00	0.00	0.0	10.0
478	478	478	30th Nat	10.00	0.00	0.0	10.0

1990	High	Low	Company	Price	Change	%	P/E
478	478	478	31st Nat	10.00	0.00	0.0	10.0
478	478	478	32nd Nat	10.00	0.00	0.0	10.0
478	478	478	33rd Nat	10.00	0.00	0.0	10.0
478	478	478	34th Nat	10.00	0.00	0.0	10.0
478	478	478	35th Nat	10.00	0.00	0.0	10.0
478	478	478	36th Nat	10.00	0.00	0.0	10.0
478	478	478	37th Nat	10.00	0.00	0.0	10.0
478	478	478	38th Nat	10.00	0.00	0.0	10.0
478	478	478	39th Nat	10.00	0.00	0.0	10.0
478	478	478	40th Nat	10.00	0.00	0.0	10.0

1990	High	Low	Company	Price	Change	%	P/E
478	478	478	41st Nat	10.00	0.00	0.0	10.0
478	478	478	42nd Nat	10.00	0.00	0.0	10.0
478	478	478	43rd Nat	10.00	0.00	0.0	10.0
478	478	478	44th Nat	10.00	0.00	0.0	10.0
478	478	478	45th Nat	10.00	0.00	0.0	10.0
478	478	478	46th Nat	10.00	0.00	0.0	10.0
478	478	478	47th Nat	10.00	0.00	0.0	1

The M62, running from the Mersey to the Humber, could become the fast-flowing artery of a powerful new region. Michael Hatfield introduces a special report

Super-city where north meets south

A new "super region" is being developed in England. The Transpennine region cuts across the traditional north-south divide by uniting Lancashire and Yorkshire in an area that is home to almost 12 million people, and five million more along its fringes.

The artery through which the wealth and enthusiasm flows is the M62 motorway from Liverpool in the west to the mouth of the Humber in the east.

The Transpennine region already accounts for more than £63 billion, or about 20 per cent, of Britain's gross domestic product. What proponents describe as the linear "super-city" has not only a fast-growing financial services sector, but ten universities and six polytechnics within its boundaries.

Transpennine, the pressure group, describes the area as Britain's second city-region, bigger in population and economic terms, than six of the 12 countries in the European Community. With increasing European integration and the advent of the Channel tunnel, there is a danger that a fragmented north of

England could become increasingly marginalised unless the region unites to project a more positive image.

However, the group's campaign recently received a nasty shock when the Boundary Commission recommended in an interim report that the lowlands of south Humberside should revert to Lincolnshire and the economic region of East Midlands. Eight months ago, the commission rejected submissions from campaigners in Yorkshire and Lincolnshire who wanted the Humber restored as a natural boundary between the two counties.

Justin Kornberg, the chairman of Transpennine, says the recommendation does not make economic sense. "If it is confirmed, we are happy to work with both sides of the Humber," he says. "Our campaign will continue. Humberside, a homogeneous economic area with tremendous potential for industrial development, is the north's gateway to Europe."

Europe and the single market are not far from the minds of those who are pushing the Transpennine idea for all they are worth and the Humber ports are now developing

rapidly after many years in the doldrums.

Manchester airport, in the west, the fastest-growing airport in Europe and the M62, virtually an all-weather link, have broken down the geographical and psychological boundary between the red and white rose counties, although there remains Whitehall's bureaucratically minded demarcation.

Mr Kornberg, who is chairman of Lister & Co, a Bradford textile manufacturer, and one of the originators of the Transpennine organisation, believes that economic forces, entrepreneurial activity and pan-Europeanism will change that attitude. He says: "The EC is already thinking in terms of regions as well as counties, and Transpennine, with the potential of being one of the most dynamic regions in Europe, could superimpose itself on Whitehall thinking."

David Fletcher, the executive director of Transpennine, believes the M62 has effectively redrawn the map of northern England. Now the United Kingdom, he says, is one great motorway box with an M4 corridor in the south



Redrawing the map of the north: the M62. David Fletcher, the executive director of the Transpennine pressure group, and (inset) Justin Kornberg, the chairman, believe it is the key to economic revival

and an M8 silicon Glen in the north. Mr Fletcher sees transpennine as a super-city stretching coast to coast across the north of England. It will be a many-centred, linear-spread city with a well-preserved industrial heritage of international significance and easy access to countryside and coastline. "In short," he says, "an excellent place in which to live and work."

The Transpennine organisation, created about 18 months ago to promote the project, has the backing of private and public companies, local authorities and enterprise agencies. It works closely with established interests such as the Yorkshire and Humberside Development Association and inward, the northwest equivalent, to avoid duplication of effort.

The region is being built on more than engineering and mining. Its activities include financial services, retailing, utilities, textiles, food, hotels and catering, ceramics and building.

ON THE TRACK

MALCOLM RIFKIND, the secretary of state for transport, writes: For the north, east-west transport links are as crucial as north-south ones. As our trade with Europe grows, the east-coast ports will have a vital role alongside the Channel tunnel and the Channel ports. The government is investing heavily in giving the transpennine region the transport infrastructure it needs. On the roads, we have a £2 billion programme in the northwest, Yorkshire and Humberside, including about £500 million on the M62 and other roads crossing the Pennines - together with a study on the need for further links. The rail lines across the Pennines have seen significant improvements in services over the past few years; and there is more to come.

Manchester airport is expanding, and is to have direct rail links to both Lancashire and Yorkshire. The transpennine region has a dynamic economy, needs transport links to match and is getting them. I look forward to the transpennine transport conference.

formed an all-party Transpennine Group.

Framed by a superb countryside, the Mersey-Humber corridor could reshape and reinvigorate the industrial heartland of the north. The M62 could be the road leading away from a late-20th century depression to a 21st-century economic rejuvenation.

* The transpennine transport conference will be held at the Crown Hotel, Harrogate, North Yorkshire, on February 18.

The new route to revival

Highway to help redress balance



Chris Haskins: "cash help"

THE IDEA of Transpennine is partly a transplantation from New England to old England. What Justin Kornberg, the pressure group's chairman, saw in Massachusetts made him believe a similar transformation could take place in England.

He says the Boston ring road became a "flywheel" of economic activity, reviving the whole area. The M62 corridor, to follow his metaphor, could be the crankshaft to regenerate the north.

Mr Kornberg is one of three people leading the Transpennine organisation. The others are Chris Haskins, its vice-chairman, who is the chairman of Northern Foods, and David Fletcher, the executive director. Hebdon Bridge in West Yorkshire is its base.

Although none of them wants to bring politics into the campaign, Mr Kornberg sees himself on the right, Mr Haskins in the middle, and Mr Fletcher, an

environmentalist, is placed somewhere in between. Mr Kornberg wants to work with the "grain" of established institutions, even envisaging a regional "Neddy", but he also wants greater entrepreneurial activity and the tapping of the talent in the north's universities and polytechnics. He argues that all the forces working together can enhance investment and employment and develop a dynamic image that could shift the balance of

Britain from the southeast. Mr Haskins is an interventionist, believing the revitalisation of the north cannot take place without public money. "I believe in planning and not just free markets," he says.

He believes the "disastrous" centralisation of decision-making in Westminster and Whitehall has reinforced the process of service industries supplanting manufacturing during the last past decade. He wants power de-

veloped to the north, so that the region can plan its road, rail and economic development.

Mr Fletcher is the former head of Manchester Polytechnic's environmental and geographical studies department. While there he sought solutions to the sterile north-south divide disputes. He favoured longitudinal development, rather than longitudinal. The traditional view of Britain as a twin north-south axis on either side of the Pennines, linking distant regions to the capital, has perpetuated the notion of a fragmented north.

"The reality is otherwise," Mr Fletcher says. "Motorways have redrawn the geography of the north and Britain as a whole. For too long northern cities and towns have individually taken the begging bowl to Westminster, competing with one another for industry and rejoining if a factory moved from one city down the road, to another."

MANCHESTER airport is the fastest-growing airport in Europe and among the top 20 in the world. More than 11 million passengers passed through its doors last year.

The airport has an intrinsic role in the development of the Transpennine corridor, although the contributions of the smaller regional airports at Liverpool, Leeds-Bradford and Humberside are not overlooked.

Manchester airport, served by a spur from the M56, is within a two-hour drive of 60 per cent of Britain's manufacturing industry, including electronics, pharmaceuticals, aerospace and vehicle production. The airport's growth is expected to increase. Gil Thompson, the chief executive of the airport, says: "The rising steelwork of our £500 million international terminal is a physical endorsement of that confidence."

Investment should double the capacity of the airport by

Airport on the factory fringe ready to expand

1998, allowing it to handle 24 million passengers a year. The new terminal, it is claimed, will create 10,000 jobs directly and a further 40,000 jobs regionally and nationally.

Other developments include phase three of Manchester's world freight terminal, which will almost double its capacity, and a rail link to be in operation by 1993. With a growth in freight of 26.5 per cent a year since 1985, Manchester has overtaken Munich, Barcelona and Geneva as a freight airport.

At Liverpool airport, British Aerospace has completed a study to construct a purpose-built airport to act as a hub for passengers from the United States flying to other European destinations. The airport would include a second runway, new terminal facilities, a high-speed rail link and motorway connections. The building of a second runway is partly the result of the shortage of runway capacity in the

overcrowded southeast. Other airports in the region also intend to expand their facilities to take advantage of the growing traffic.

Last year Leeds-Bradford airport handled nearly 900,000 passengers, 27 per cent more than in the previous year, and made an after-tax profit of nearly £1.3 million. Most of the growth has come from scheduled operators increasing the size of their

aircraft. The airport has less success than most similar-sized airports when it comes to charter operators, which represent only 28 per cent of passenger traffic, because of transport department restrictions on night flights.

Humberside international airport has no night restrictions and hopes to pick up charter traffic once its 500-metre runway extension has been built. The runway is too short to allow fully laden charter jets from Mediterranean holiday destinations to land. The number of passengers using the airport has increased from 72,000 in 1979 to 154,000 last year, but the airport authority hopes the development programme will allow it to increase that figure to 500,000 passengers a year.

MAINTAINING COMMUNICATIONS

Parkman Consulting Engineers, maintaining the Greater Manchester Motorways for the Department of Transport, plays a key role in Trans-Pennine communications. This is just one facet of the Parkman Total Capability in Engineering Consultancy Services available throughout the UK. For all transportation, development and environmental services call Eric Bond on 061-236 0666.



Sheffield Wednesday, Brussels Thursday, Paris Friday.

Sheffield will soon be back in Europe. And it will be nothing to do with the footballing achievements of either Dave Bassett or Ron Atkinson.

In fact, it's A. F. Budge (Mining) Ltd, who is gearing Sheffield up for the new European challenge. By funding the development of Sheffield and Rotherham's Airport, we're helping the city to realise a 70 year old dream - at no cost to the taxpayer. Providing businessmen with fast links to the major European cities.

And the airport is only one of the schemes we're helping to get off the ground at Tinsley Park. It's Budge, for instance, who will build an enterprising 1,000,000 square foot industrial and commercial complex - the prestigious Aerocentre Business Park.

If the airport's the gateway to Europe, this high quality Business Park represents a gateway to Sheffield. Attracting many new companies and industries to the city, and serving

as a recreational amenity for local residents.

We're improving Sheffield's business prospects in many other ways, too.

It's Budge who has constructed the new link road with the A630.

It's Budge who is working day and night to extract the 1,500,000 tonnes of high grade coal reserves from the site beneath the airport, securing these precious resources before the chance is irretrievably lost.

It's Budge who is restoring a derelict site and transforming an impoverished landscape, displaying an exemplary concern for the protection of the environment.

It's Budge who is providing the surrounding population with literally thousands of new job opportunities.

It's Budge who is helping the steel city to finally fulfill its true potential within the European market.

Budge and Sheffield. We're both ready to take off.

BUDGE

A.F. Budge (Mining) Limited, West Carr Road, Retford, Notts., DN22 7SW. Tel: (0777) 706789 Fax: Group III: (0777) 705066

IN THE JUNGLE OF BUSINESS LAW, DO YOUR ADVISORS SPEAK ENGLISH OR GIBBERISH?

Plain English is a creature of some rarity. By tradition, in legal circles, it is less common still. Talk to Hephworth & Chadwick however, and you'll find we speak the same language as you. We aim to clarify, not to confuse. Our fluency extends to all aspects of business law - mergers and acquisitions, employment and employee benefits, property services, dispute resolution, intellectual property and corporate recovery. Our all-round expertise in these areas has earned us a reputation as a leading commercial law firm. Our membership of the Eversheds national law group gives us access to even greater resources to comprehensively serve our clients' needs.

HEPWORTH & CHADWICK
A MEMBER OF EVERSHEDS
COMMERCIAL LAWYERS FOR THE 90'S

Cloth Hall Court, Infirmary Street, Leeds LS1 2JB. Telephone: (0532) 430391. Fax: (0532) 456188.

KIRKLEES Success in the 90's



WHERE

Based around its major towns of Huddersfield and Dewsbury, in the heart of Transpennine, Kirklees is an ideal location for new and expanding businesses.

WHAT

With excellent office and industrial opportunities, Kirklees means success in the 90's.

HOW

A Council committed to optimising development potential
Prime buildings and sites
Incentives for development
A thriving local economy
A superb environment
Instant access to the motorway network.

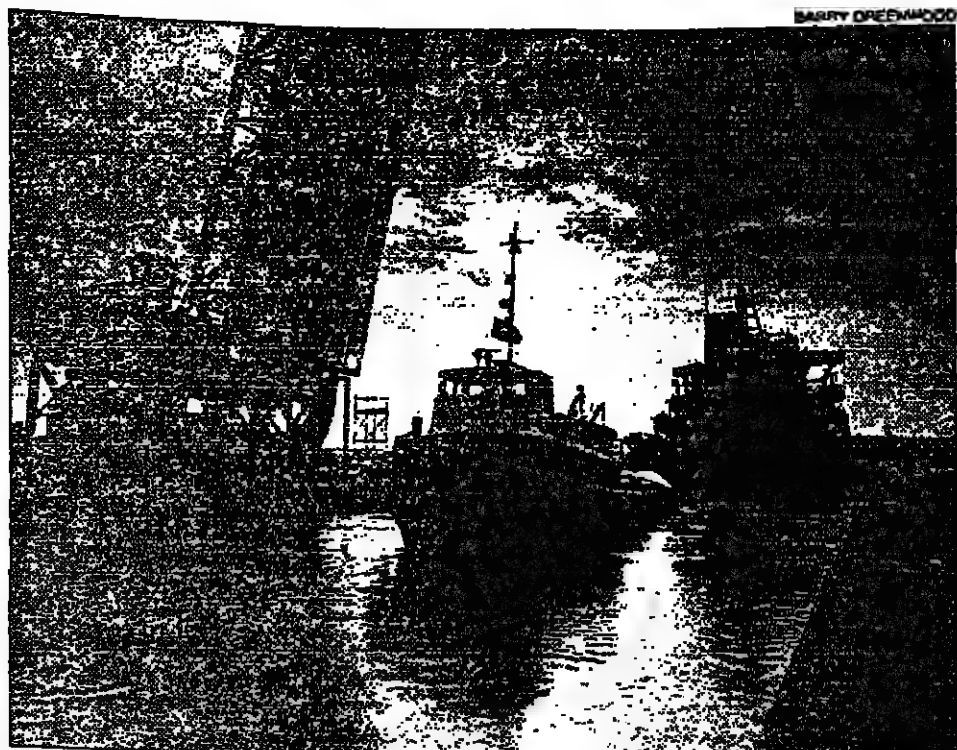
CONTACT

The Economic Development Unit, 5th Floor, Kirklees House, Market Street, Huddersfield HD1 2EY. Tel: (0484) 442265



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Docking at Liverpool: the port is bracing itself for the opening of the Channel tunnel

The boats come in again

THE GOOD times are back for Humberside. In the past year, the Humber estuary has grown into the UK's leading ports complex as trade with European Community countries has expanded. The ports in the estuary last year handled a record amount of traffic.

The Humber has more than 100 berths. Four main ports, Immingham, Hull, Grimsby and Goole, operated by Associated British Ports, are complemented by more than 40 independent wharfs.

More than £100 million has been committed by investors in the short to medium term and more than £500 million has been spent on new roads and improvements, although the failure to fund the M11 expansion all the way to the Humber bridge was, says Chris Haskins, the chairman

of Northern Foods at Hull, a "disaster".

Immingham, which can take 120,000-ton ships, is Britain's busiest port in terms of cargo movement and fourth biggest in terms of cargo volume. The growth in container and roll-on, roll-off traffic has added to its business. The Fred Olsen line and the Maersk Group between them have 40 sailings a day to Iceland, the Continent and the Mediterranean.

Grimsby has successfully developed its processing industry and 250,000 tons of fish are handled every year. The port is also an entry point for foreign cars and handles about half of the UK's imports of Volkswagens and Audis.

The smaller ports of Hull and Goole have also grown. Hull, which handles liquid bulk cargoes, is planning

investment in new facilities and has reopened its 17-acre container terminal. Last year, Hull won parliamentary approval for an expansion plan involving the creation of three new roll-on, roll-off berths.

On the other coast, the port of Liverpool, once almost £2 million in debt, has raised productivity at Seaforth, its 600-acre freeport. Since opening in 1985, the freeport has handled almost 20 million tons. Although expectations that the port would act as a bridge between the United States and Europe have not been fulfilled, there are hopes that more trade across the Irish Sea will boost business.

Transpennine backers believe the region's ports can meet the challenge of the Channel tunnel, so long as business and industry look north to the facilities it offers.

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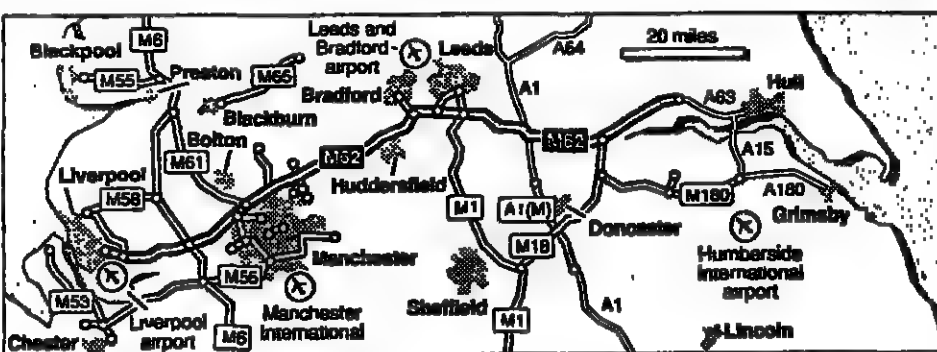
Road to a stronger economy?

THE coast-to-coast M62, already established as a main trade route in the United Kingdom, carries a higher proportion of heavy goods than the national average. Certain sections are busier than the M25, handling 130,000 vehicles a day, and 25 per cent is freight, compared with a national motorway average of 15 per cent.

The statistics have good and bad implications. The potential for creating a transpennine region along the motorway corridor is virtually self-evident, but there are already areas of congestion, particularly around the Manchester conurbation.

Schemes to improve traffic flows have started. Around Manchester, for example, there is a £300 million plan for a Greater Manchester western and northern relief road linking the M6 to the

The motorway crossing the country carries many potential benefits, but already it appears a victim of its own success



M66. The result will be a four-lane route from Eccles to Huddersfield over the Pennines, giving better access to West Yorkshire for Stockport and Manchester airport.

These, and other improvements, however, will prob-

ably be insufficient to absorb the growth of economic development along the M62. Justin Kornberg, the chairman of Transpennine, would like to see the M62 developed in harmony with European Commission guidelines as a

test route for the creation of an "electronic highway".

Vehicles would carry instruments to give warnings of traffic hold-ups and alternative routes. However, even this may not solve the problems caused by the expected

increase in goods traffic.

Transpennine supporters believe the only real way to relieve congestion on the M62 is to build a new, parallel motorway. A Manchester-Sheffield motorway is greatly favoured, to be linked with the M18 which leads to Humberside. There is, however, a problem, of which David Fletcher, executive director of Transpennine and a countryside commissioner, is well aware. It would mean driving a road through the Peak national park, which would enrage environmentalists. The national park authority has already objected.

Mr Fletcher and others have come up with a compromise. They suggest that the abandoned Sheffield-Manchester rail tunnel under the Peak Park at Woodhead could be re-opened and widened for road use. The cost, however, appears prohibitive.

THE EROSION of the north's manufacturing base over the years has meant not only a reduction in output, and rising unemployment, but a collapse in confidence, which has only lately been overcome.

Chris Haskins, the chairman of Northern Foods, based in Hull, and the vice-chairman of Transpennine, describes it as "a scandal" that so

Great growth area of the century

many northern companies have moved their headquarters to the south.

There are signs, however, that the tide could be turning. Mr Haskins says the corridor is the perfect location for what he believes is the great British growth area of the 20th century.

Skilled and experienced labour is available for the food industry, and American and European food and distribution companies, from Kellogg in Manchester to Heinz in Wigan, have bases in the region. Shell Chemicals UK relocated its headquarters

from London to Chester. Pilkington, at St Helens, is to build a £70 million float glass factory. The attractions have included availability of land and labour.

Earlier this year, Pioneer Electronics of Japan decided to invest £20 million in its first

UK manufacturing plant on a 30-acre site near Castleford, creating 500 jobs. Digital is to open new offices in a £20 million investment at Warrington.

The corridor is slowly being seen as an area of enormous potential. Unemployment, however, is higher than the national average, although there is also a skills shortage.

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Liverpool Freeport — Britain's largest and most successful free zone — handles more than £2 million worth of goods every week. The 640 acre high security zone offering simple Customs procedures and freedom from Import Duty, Import VAT, EEC levies and quotas, has more than 400,000 sq ft of accommodation occupied for storage and distribution, processing and manufacturing with another 80,000 sq ft planned in 1991.

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When a horse bites the hand that feeds it

THE "racing industry", they call it. Well, if racing is an industry, it is an extremely peculiar one. The Zetland report demonstrates that racing is heading for financial disaster. Half the trainers are thinking hard about getting out of the sport.

Racehorses are the canaries down the mine: they are hypersensitive to the poisonous atmosphere of recession. When we feel a pinch, racing feels a crunch. More and more owners are reducing their commitments: a racehorse is, after all, a fairly obvious area of personal economy.

Racehorses have always provided a finely honed method of losing money but never have the figures been as daunting. The report shows that owners lose 30

SIMON BARNES

per cent of their operating costs — they get a mere 20 per cent of their outlay back in prize-money. Many owners never do anything like as well.

Racing has enjoyed some good years. Owners and owning syndicates rushed to enjoy the fun and prestige of owning a racehorse. Now the dilettantes are backing out and the long-term lovers of the game are cutting down. Such is life: such is economics.

Trainers are getting out as well, according to Zetland. What has happened to all the money from

the boom years? Why hasn't racing got a nice financial hump, like a camel, for these arid times?

It seems impossible that racing has not made the money to keep going in the manner to which it has been accustomed, for racing is an industry that has the unusual distinction of being subsidised by its major shareholders and by its workforce.

Owners are in the game for love and glory. And so are most of the stable lads. Racing and horses cater for an addiction to the switchback ride of victory and disappointment. Lads are highly skilled people, as anyone who has ridden an oated-up thoroughbred will confirm. They work long hours but the satisfactions can be tremendous. Too many of the best ones leave when

they start families. They cannot afford to stay in racing: the pay is too bad.

All lads are subsidising the sport by their acceptance of this, but lads with families who stay in racing are subsidising the industry as much as an oil sheikh.

Racing has an enormous amount going for it. Any "industry" whose shareholders come in expecting to lose money and are quite willing to do so, and with workers prepared to do all the tough, dangerous and dirty work for buttons, is clearly on a good wicket.

But racing is still in trouble. For all their love of it, more and more owners, lads and trainers are talking about getting out of the sport. How come, with all this

goodwill, is the industry in such a desperate state?

The reasons go back into pre-history and it is far too late to alter them now. Too much of racing's money has gone into the bookmaking industry. Here the word "industry" can be understood in a more conventional way.

Racing is, in fact, the only industry that appears to have been run for years entirely for the benefit of another industry. Owners and lads have, in their various ways, subsidised racing while bookmakers have made money.

But British racing lost that chance a long time ago.

The Tote has never managed to put itself over as a dynamic and attractive organisation. It has always managed to look like a poor relation to the bookies: the less attractive option.

Meanwhile, the bookies are less buoyant themselves these days, even though the industries that traditionally do best in a slump are brewing and betting. The bookies are not likely to be over-enthusiastic about offering a further whack to the Levy Board, or working more closely with the Tote, as Zetland suggests.

It is said that these hard times will force the industry to become leaner and harder and to get rid of dead wood and bad horses. But horses is a concept I cannot admit:

but certainly owners and trainers have gone into the business with unrealistic expectations. Be sure the slump shall find these out.

The point is that racing really should not be in such a state. People are in the game for love: they are willing to dedicate their lives to horses and to hazard. People have been flinging money and time and skills at racehorses for years.

It is said that the racing "industry" has not been able to make more of this. Racing cannot carry on like this. More trainers, owners and lads will leave the industry: there will be fewer yards, fewer meetings, fewer courses and fewer horses. Either that or a revolution: but that has never been racing's way.

GOLF

Faldo and Norman make little impact

MELBOURNE (Reuters) — The world's two leading players, Greg Norman and Nick Faldo, found themselves upstaged by unheralded rivals in the opening round of the Australian Classic here yesterday.

While Norman and Faldo had trouble coping with Royal Melbourne's fast greens — scoring 71 and 72 respectively — Chris Patton, of the United States, and the New Zealander, Simon Owen, both returned cards of 67, four under par, to share the lead.

Faldo made a promising start and was one under at the turn as the result of a birdie three at the third. But he found the bushes at the dog-legged 11th and took six, dropping two strokes. Some poor putting on undulating greens at the 15th and 16th sent him tumbling to three over.

Then, having stalked away from the 16th while his playing partner, Colin Montgomerie, was still on the green, Faldo regained his composure to finish with two birdies for a 72.

Norman spent most of his round in the shadow of his partners, Peter Senior, of Australia, who birdied the first three holes before slipping back to even par, and the American John Morse, who was last week's Australian Open.

Morse was three under by the fifth and lipped the cup with several further birdie attempts before two dropped shots late in the round pulled him back to 70. Owen, playing behind Norman, was far from disheartened at seeing the crowds constantly melt away as he approached tees and greens. He went round without a bogey and had four birdies in the first 12 holes.

Owen, who will celebrate his fortieth birthday on Monday, said he owed his improvement to a tip from his younger brother Peter, a male nurse who lives in Melbourne and acts as his particular coach.

While Owen plays regularly on this heavily bunkered course, Patton marked his first visit with an up-and-down round. The 1989 US amateur champion three-putted his first two holes and said: "I usually figure out to do well you need a good opening six holes. At that stage I was one over, so I was pleased to hang in." This he did to some effect for he repaired the damage caused by those two early dropped shots by scoring six birdies.

The US PGA champion, Wayne Grady, disappointed his home gallery with a 74, dropping four shots on the inward half.

LEADING FIRST ROUND SCORES:

(Australian unless otherwise stated): 67: S. Owen (NZ), C. Patton (US), 68: R. Zokol (CZ), K. Dixon, P. Senior (AUS), 69: B. Faldo (GB), V. Singh (IND), G. Turner (NZ), D. McGee (IRL), 70: J. Morse (US), G. Norman (AUS), G. Herbert (GB), S. Owen (NZ), 71: J. Norman (AUS), 72: J. Morse (US), 73: J. Norman (AUS), 74: W. Grady (AUS), 75: J. Norman (AUS).

ONNASSON, Japan:

Min-nan and T. M. Chen, of Taiwan, and Teruo Sugihara and Katsuyuki Hasegawa, of Japan, had rounds of 70 to share the first-round lead in the \$400,000 Dai-ichi Open here (AP reports). Sugihara finished strongly by scoring four birdies in the last six holes on a course measuring 6,273 yards.

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An FA Cup run has lifted the gloom enveloping Chorley

By IAN ROSS

ENGLAND UNDER-21: J Walker (Tottenham Hotspur); P Waters (Oxford Athletic); G C Charles, Nottingham (Nottingham Forest); J Wright (Aston Villa); S Blets (Aston Villa); S A Addison (Sunderland); D Blackwell (Wimbledon); R Codd (Aston Villa); J Ebdon (Everton); G Harrison (Cardiff City); G Evans (Southampton); N James (Nottingham Forest); G McInnes (Liverpool).

WALLES UNDER-21: T Roberts (Queen's Park Rangers); J Perry (Cardiff City); C Powell (Cardiff City); J Law (Queen's Park Rangers); K Symons (Porthsmouth); J Williams (Cardiff City); J Jones (Cardiff City); K Morgan (Aston Villa); G Graham, Manchester United; M Ebdon (Everton); G C Owen, Wrexham); G Harrison (Cardiff City).

Norwich: D Hope (England).

By CHRIS MOORE

the Wolverhampton-based Video Sport, said: "There is a big market for trying to obtain World Cup footage because it is held by another company who have gone into liquidation."

Jozef Venglos, the Villa manager, has denied reports from Poland that Roman Koscielniak, the highly rated Legia Warsaw forward, is likely to join Villa in a £1 million deal.

But Venglos would not deny "categorically" any interest in the Polish international. "Like any manager I am always interested in good players," he said.

● The Manchester United mid-field player, Paul Ince, has withdrawn from the England B squad because of a groin injury. The manager, Graham Taylor, has not named a replacement.

● The Norwich City forward, Robert Fleck, is likely to be out of action for a month following



By WALTER GAMMIE



League but are all lacking something." Finding a goalkeeper proved a taxing problem until Williams signed Dave Ryan, who spent 13 years at Northwich Victoria, and had started the season trying to break into Macclesfield's side. Getting the team together was in itself

a small triumph but Chorley's form is not what it was. The HFS Lions League has been patchy, starting with five draws and "too many matches lost 1-0" according to Tim Kelly, the chairman of nine months.

In an area where the pull of nearby Blackburn, Preston, Bolton and Wigan draws away spectators and where success is a paramount priority to sustain interest, particularly with memories of life in the Conference relatively fresh, Kelly had taken over a club where costs were soaring and too little revenue was being generated.

The first round win over Bury, courtesy of goals by Moss and John Aspinall, blew the clouds away. Kelly says, wryly, that he even came through last Sunday's shareholders' meeting largely unscathed. The club has also filled a long-standing vacancy for a sponsor, OBG Construction Ltd, from Manchester. "It would be icing on the cake if we got through at Gay Meadow. After a lot of hard times, to get something like this is really great," he said.

By OWEN JENKINS

The club greeted Mosley's decision, which was conveyed to them in a letter with "sadness and regret." Ivor Taylor, the Pontypool team secretary said: "Kevin has said that his intention was to leave up to his captaincy and this couldn't have come at a worse time for us with the game against Swansea. We will leave it until the weekend to see if we can get him back going on. We have known for quite a while that he has been disappointed on the field."

"Times came to a head against Cardiff a fortnight ago," Mosley said, "and I was worried about his attitude. We want to help him out but haven't seen him yet. He is our main supplier of line out ball and his loss will be a big handicap on the field."

"There is a tremendous pride in the position and it isn't given out lightly. But now we must look at what is the best for the club. I've heard of troops losing a battle but not the general."

AMERICAN FOOTBALL I

BY RICHARD WETHERELL

As from next April the game's most prestigious event, the FA Cup final at Wembley, will kick off at 2.30pm instead of 3pm.

As David Howes, the public affairs executive, put it tactfully: "The game will retain its traditional starting time." Television, the showcase which recently made the Great Britain Olympic Games the most widely watched event in the country, has required Saturday afternoon viewing for sports watchers, is the reason.

Howes said: "The Challenge Cup final has been watched by millions of people throughout the world. When we kick off at three o'clock the end of the match, and the post-match interviews and scenes of rejoicing clash head-on with the football final scores.

There have been protests from rugby league supporters when the cameras have cut away

RUGBY LEAGUE

By KETH MACKLIN

YACHTING

By BARRY PICKTHALL

OLYMPIC GAMES

By JOHN GOODBODY

Two days later, the executive committee of the CCPR had agreed to co-operate with the IOC and the British Olympic Association, but some resentment within the CCPR that Lawson had been sent to back London at the expense of others. Manchester is expected to try again and so the IOC will be in a difficult position to secure the 1992 Games.

When asked whether the CCPR would co-operate with Manchester, Ron Emes, the chairman, said: "This is a question we will consider at the next executive meeting later this month. It would be quite feasible for us to co-operate with others as well as London."

Meanwhile, Dr Palmer, the secretary of the BOA, said he was drawing up a discussion paper to be considered at its meeting on December 19. He said: "This will look at the process they will go through to evaluate the bid and to evaluate them and the standards we require of them."

Several London-based groups are now considering their bids for the 1992 Games and are expected to unify their efforts. Coe's company, London Olympics 2000, has already had support from many important companies and also leading sportsmen including Sir Thompson and Gary Lineker.

There are several members of the BOA who believe that it is pointless bidding again for the Games unless there is a genuine change in the IOC.

A prominent judge has been appointed to head an independent commission that will investigate published allegations that many leading East and West German performers regularly took performance-enhancing

By DAVID POWELL

Four years ago, the AAA was facing bankruptcy but now, for the second successive year, it has made a £1 million surplus. As John Perera, the APA director, said: "The improved turnaround in finances is down to a number of things but, if you look at it in bald terms, the surplus is almost directly represented by the increase in sponsorship income."

Tony Ward, the AAA spokesman, said: "We attribute our success in a very large part to the great job APA has done for us."

By DAVID RHYS JONES

when the young Scot established a set tie on the fourth end.

Seldom can a game have been swung more dramatically; a trait gave Bryant two shots and boosted his confidence.

In the other semi-final, a match of fluctuating fortunes, Tony Alcock recovered from a poor start, won the second set, lost a 3-0 lead in the deciding set, then beat John Price, the world indoor champion, with a full house that turned a 3-5 deficit into a 7-5 triumph.

SEMI-FINALS: D J Bryant (Eng) vs A Blair (Scot), 7-3, 7-2; T Alcock (Eng) vs J Price (Wales), 7-3, 7-4, 7-5.

the investment must be

In the next three months, consortium will be searching

FOR THE

SNOOKER

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LEADING POSITIONS (at 9.2

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resquilar, Fr), 3,882; 2, New Sp
sch (J Hall, GB), 4,131; 3, *Soc*

By RICHARD EATON

Cheryl Johnson. Bradbury's response to the tough training given by the coach, Lee Jackson, may be one of the most interesting developments of the Olympic squad.

Also helping the players prepare for an Olympic debut in 1992 is Morten Frost, of Denmark, the four-times former all-England champion, who will provide practise sessions at his adopted home club, Wembley. He should be of special value to the men's single players who have been retained from the original squad, Darren Hall, Anders Nielsen and Steve Butts. The others to be retained are Gill Clark, Gillian Gowers, Jo Murguegide and Helen Trokoe. The winner of the Scottish Open 12 days ago.

EUROPEAN CHAMPIONSHIP: Bowditch second in Group 4; Dominie 88, Sweden

COUNTY MATCHES: Berkshire 101; Suffolk 98; Hertfordshire 105; Norfolk 105; Bedford

[illegible]

BRITISH COAL YOUTH LEAGUE

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SPAIN / ANDORRA	651
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ITALY (M-Z)	655
SCOTLAND	654
GERMANY / LIECHTENSTEIN	651
BULGARIA / YUGOSLAVIA / ROMANIA / TURKEY	682
NORWAY / SWEDEN	653
NETS / CORDON	654
LEAVE SHI HOLS	665

Callers code 33ppm/line over rate,
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